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Saipan Tribune

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

In a CNMI election, no one knows how you voted. Do you believe that to be true or false?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

INSIDE

NATION

Rep. Gabrielle Giffords leads a crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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ASIA

More than 3 million Roman Catholic worshippers paraded with a charred Christ statue.

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OVERDRIVE

Pssst: Wanna know how to get a $100,000 executive sedan for 40 percent off?

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Prayers urged as senator undergoes chemo. PAGE 2
Vice speaker will be joining Fitial in GOP. PAGE 5

EXCEPT FOR TASI TOURS AND ITS AFFILIATES:

Mañagaha is now off limits to other water sport businesses

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Public Lands has issued notices to 20 businesses, telling them to stop picking up tourists on Mañagaha for parasailing, banana boating, snorkeling, scuba diving, or other water sports unless they are Tasi Tours or have an agreement with Tasi Tours, which has the exclusive concession rights to the famous tourist island.

See MAÑAGAHA on Page 4

File photo shows a tourist enjoying a banana boat ride after leaving Managaha Island. The Department of Public Lands told 20 businesses to stop picking up tourists on Managaha and taking them for parasailing, banana boating, snorkeling, scuba diving, or other water sports unless they are Tasi Tours or have an agreement with Tasi Tours, which has the exclusive concession rights to the famous tourist island.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Suspension of early retirement bill sought

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The NMI Retirement Fund is urging the Legislature to suspend action on the early retirement bill now pending in the House of Representatives, saying it will accelerate the growth of future payouts to members and will eventually kill the pension agency that much sooner.

Fund administrator Richard Villagomez said that the agency strongly opposes House Bill 17-204, which, if enacted into law, will continue to allow Class I members the option to pay in the difference between Class I and Class II to retire with Class II "like" benefits.

In his letter to Rep. Sylvestre Iguel, chairman of the House Health and Welfare Committee, Villagomez disclosed that benefit payouts totaled $53 million last fiscal year 2011 and if this continues, the Fund's assets will be completely depleted in less than three years.

HB 17-204, he said, is expected to result in a significant increase in the number of withdrawals and refunds

See SUSPENSION on Page 4

GOP bets remain firmly behind tough immigration laws

By JAMES ROSEN
MCCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS

WASHINGTON—When it comes to illegal immigration, Republican presidential candidates are talking like it's 1999.

Listening to the GOP White House aspirants, voters might not know that the number of illegal immigrants in the United States is down, attempted border crossings are at a 40-year low and President Barack Obama has deported undocumented workers at twice the rate of his predecessor.

With slight variations, the top GOP candidates back mass deportations, tough state enforcement laws and extending the 675-mile fence along the U.S.-Mexico border, where illegal crossings were near their highest back in 1999. The top Republican candidates also oppose giving most illegal immigrants a path to legal residency.

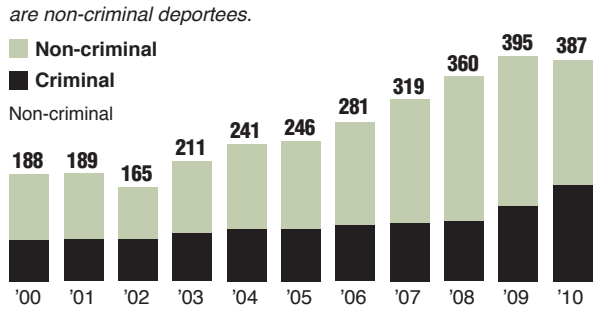
"Border crossings are at a historic low, deportations are at a historic high, yet every Republican presidential candidate says the first thing

See GOP on Page 4

Rising deportations

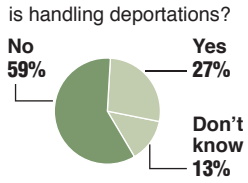
ELECTION 2012

Deportations of unauthorized immigrants have reached record levels under President Barack Obama. Most of those affected are non-criminal deportees.



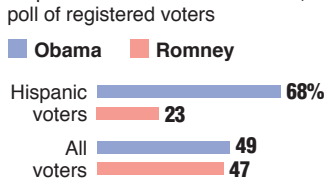
Hispanics react

Do you approve of the way the Obama administration is handling deportations?



Impact on election?

In a match-up with Mitt Romney, Hispanic voters still favor Obama; poll of registered voters



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Source: Pew Hispanic Center
Graphic: Judy Treible

Pew Research Center for People & the Press poll, November 2011 of 537 Hispanic register voters and 1,578 registered voters

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Local

Unpaid employer contributions now total $221M

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Autonomous agencies and the central government have accumulated a total of $221.054 million in unpaid employer contributions to the Retirement Fund as of Nov. 30 last year.

In his report to the board, acting Fund comptroller Pablito Amog disclosed that the central government owes the pension agency $181.042 million while autonomous departments' unpaid obligation now totals $40.012 million.

It was also learned that, except for the CNMI government itself, no autonomous agencies are complying with the newly mandated 60.8 percent employer contribution rate since Oct. 1, 2011, adding to these agencies debt with the Fund.

Among independent agencies, the Public School System tops the list with the highest unpaid employer contribution of $26.7 million, followed by the Northern Marianas College, which owes $6.4 million. Other agencies on the list are the Tinian Municipal Treasury, $1.6 million; Commonwealth Utilities Corp., $3.9 million; Commonwealth Health Center, $328,090; Commonwealth Development Authority, $10,128; Commonwealth Ports Authority, $67,323; Marianas Visitors Authority, $786,103;Tinian Gaming Commission, $26,742; and the Tinian Municipal Office, $23,300.

Besides the unpaid employer contributions, the Fund disclosed that the CNMI government also failed to remit other obligations to the agency, including the death claims loan payment of $299,776 for 10 months plus 10 percent penalty; the judicial building loan payment with an accumulated total of $1.187 million as of Nov. 30, 2011; and the unremmitted $1.7 million balance for the fiscal year 2011 appropriations and $727,882 in unremitted 20 percent and 30 percent hotel and container taxes.

Prayers urged as Senator Crisostimo undergoes chemo

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Sen. Luis Crisostimo (Ind-Saipan) has been undergoing chemotherapy in California since last year for his throat cancer, and the Senate leadership is calling on the public to include the senator in their prayers.

Tina Camacho, the senator's staff on Capital Hill for five years, confirmed yesterday that Crisostimo has been undergoing chemotherapy in Los Angeles, California but that he makes it a point to call his office on Saipan almost every work day to check on matters related to his job as a senator.

Crisostimo

"He's been doing okay, and he calls almost every day," Camacho told *Saipan Tribune*. She said she also scans and sends the agenda for each session to Crisostimo.

Palacios said the senator, a father of three, has a house in Las Vegas but visits California for his chemotherapy.

Crisostimo missed seven Senate sessions from Oct. 5 to Dec. 28, 2011, based on a review of the Senate's attendance records for the last quarter of 2011.

Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) said Crisostimo has been on medical leave since October, and that's why he couldn't attend the sessions.

"The Senate continues to join the family in praying for the senator's speedy recovery. We understand that he has a major health issue. We ask the public to pray for Senator Crisostimo and his family," Manglona said.

Crisostimo's wife Mary has also been with Crisostimo since last year.

Palacios said they originally expected the senator to come back to Saipan in February, unless he needed to stay longer or his medical condition worsens. As of yesterday, there's no telling whether he will undergo operation, Palacios added.

"I also ask people to pray for the senator," she said.

There's also no telling whether Crisostimo will seek re-election in November, or whether he will be able to finish his term until early January 2013.

During the last Senate session, senators also offered a special prayer for Crisostimo.

Man gets 4 mos. for beating wife, resisting arrest

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A man accused of beating up his wife and threatening to kill her with a machete has been sentenced to four months in prison.

Superior Court associate judge David A. Wiseman on Friday sentenced Rhiner Aguon Tiberke to a total of two years in prison, all suspended except for four months, for assault and battery and resisting arrest. The 36-year-old Tiberke was given credit for the 12 days he has already served in jail.

He will start serving his sentence on Jan. 25, 2012, and is expected to be released on March 13, 2012, after which he will be placed on supervised probation for five years. He will be required to undergo alcohol and drug counseling.

Wiseman prohibited Tiberke from consuming any alcoholic beverages during the first year of his probation. He also ordered the defendant to pay a $500 fine, $25 court assessment fee, and probation fee.

The judge also ordered Tiberke to pay restitution to the victim for the medical fees she incurred as a result of the assault.

Tiberke was supposed to have a jury trial starting yesterday, Monday but on Friday, he pleaded guilty to assault and battery, and resisting arrest.

According to court records, this case first came on for a change of plea hearing on Oct. 19, 2011, during which Tiberke refused to go forward with the change of plea. As a result, Wiseman set the jury trial for Jan. 9, 2012.

On Dec. 27, 2011, assistant public defender Matthew Meyer, counsel for the defendant, told the court that Tiberke now wishes to change his plea in lieu of proceeding to trial.

Wiseman expressed concerns about this request and took the matter under advisement. Three days later, the judge issued an order denying Tiberke's request for a change of plea hearing without any written motion or exigent circumstances to justify a negotiated change of plea.

On Friday, Meyer told the court that Tiberke would enter a guilty plea. Assistant attorney general Russell Lorfing appeared for the government.

In his written order issued yesterday, Wiseman said that notwithstanding his recent order regarding attorneys filing untimely plea agreements and otherwise disregarding the court orders, and his earlier refusal to accept the untimely plea agreement, "the interests of judicial economy and good cause have resulted in the court accepting this untimely change of plea."

Wiseman said this plea agreement assures the community that Tiberke is under supervision by being incarcerated and then monitored through the Judiciary and the probation office for an extended time.

Tiberke was arrested in June 2011 after he beat up his wife and threatened her with a machete at their residence in San Vicente.

Fund told to pay retiree's disability retirement benefits

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Superior Court associate judge David A. Wiseman directed the NMI Retirement Fund yesterday to pay the disability retirement benefits of a retiree and to take immediate action on the applications for disability retirement filed by three others.

Wiseman ordered the Fund to pay Leilani M. Basa-Alam an annuity of 66-2/3 percent of her salary at the time of separation from government service and back pay amounting to the difference dating back to April 4, 2009.

Wiseman also ordered the Fund to give Barbara C. Santos, Mariano Arriola, and Balbina DLC. Taisacan the opportunity to resubmit their applications for disability retirement.

The judge ordered the Fund's board to take immediate action and reach a determination in the cases of Santos, Arriola, and Taisacan within 30 days from the submission of their applications.

In Basa-Alam's case, a factual determination has been made awarding disability retirement at a rate of 50 percent of her salary. Wiseman pointed out, though, that the CNMI Supreme Court's recent ruling in Michael P. Cody's case has made it clear that Public Law 6-17 applies to Basa-Alam and therefore a rate of 66-2/3 percent should have been awarded.

With respect to the cases of Santos, Arriola, and Taisacan, Wiseman remanded them to the Fund for a factual determination and decision in accordance with the law set forth in the Supreme Court ruling and in his order.

The Fund board alleges that Santos and Arriola have not submitted any factual disputes.

But Wiseman said he is reluctant to "remand back to a body who appears to have little to no consideration of the urgency of claims before it, especially when such claims have a large impact on the livelihood of claimants, who by submitting applications for disability have impliedly limited capacity to work and earn a living."

Wiseman said that pursuant to law, the Fund board must consider anew the claims for disability retirement of Santos, Arriola and Taisacan in light of the board's fiduciary duty.

The Fund had denied disability retirement to Arriola and Santos. Taisacan's application has been neither approved nor denied. Basa-Alam's application for disability was approved in the amount of 50 percent of her salary.

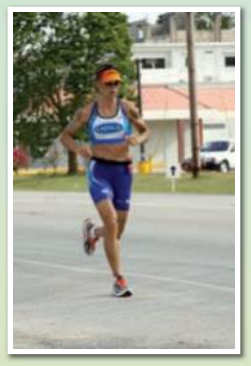
The petitioners, through counsel Jeanne Rayphand, challenged the Fund's decision regarding disability retirement and the subsequent action taken by the board.

A weekly update from the Marianas Visitors Authority
Tourism is everybody's business.

2012 Signature Events

Every year, a series of Signature Events in the Northern Marianas are put on by the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA) and its tourism partners to attract visitors and provide the local community an opportunity to actively participate in the tourism industry.

In 2012, the MVA looks forward to hosting these events:



January 28	5th Annual Marianas Coffee Trail Run
February 18-19	8th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival
March 3	7th Annual Saipan Marathon
March 24	11th Annual XTERRA Saipan Championship
March 31	23rd Annual Tagaman Triathlon
May	Tourism Month
May 5, 12, 19, 26	14th Annual Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden
June 9	13th Annual Tinian Turquoise Blue Triathlon & Reef Swim
June 23	4th Annual Saipan International Open Water Flipper Race Tournament
November 10	19th Annual Rota Blue Triathlon
December 1	6th Annual Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle

Whether you join as a full competitor or participant, a volunteer, a sponsor, or a spectator, mark your calendars to join these 2012 Signature Events.

HAFA ADAI & TIROW WAY
MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
Division of Environmental Quality DEQ CNMI

This Tourism Tuesday space is provided by Saipan Tribune

Fund board thumbs down moving $24M to FICA

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Members of the NMI Retirement Fund board of trustees have turned down a recommendation to move a large portion of retirees' monies to the Federal Insurance Contribution Act, or FICA, despite its offer of a higher interest rate.

Fund administrator Richard Villagomez had sought the board's go-signal for his recommendation to transfer $24 million of the Fund's assets to FICA, but the board rejected this move after an executive session on Friday.

"We disapproved the recommendation because the board did not find it comforting to make such a decision at the moment. We already made the decision to go to CDARS and the board is not ready to entertain any further allocation of assets. With the current status [of our portfolio], we are not comfortable about making such a decision," Igisomar told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

Since the departure of the Fund's investment consultant in middle of last year, the board has been liquidating the Fund's assets and putting the cash under the certificate of deposit account registry service, or CDARS program. As of Dec. 27, 2011, some $90 million of the agency's $256.7 million assets have already been transferred to the program. The board's goal is to put all of its funds in the program until a new investment consultant is hired.

Since the law does not allow the Fund board to make investment decisions without an expert's advice, Igisomar said they intend to follow the former consultant's recommendation to go into cash to protect the retirees' monies.

In his prior report to the board, Villagomez said that the Fund would earn a higher return from FICA, which offers a .25-percent annual interest rate compared to CDARS, which has an interest rate of only .02 percent.

Compared to CDARS, which has maturity date of liquidity, FICA offers daily liquidation, according to Villagomez. He said FICA has also been part of the Fund's discussion with its former consultant.

He said FICA is a program similar to CDARS. It has the same goal of protecting large sums within limits set by the Federal Deposit Insurance Commission. Unlike CDARS, FICA has $24 million cap on the amount that can be placed by a holder.

"The incentive in participating in FICA is the slightly higher rate of returns. We want to be in there. There are still monies that are transitioning from Glidepath 2013 asset allocation into the CDARS program, so we can set aside whatever FICA would accept," Villagomez told the board Friday.

Man allegedly points gun at another

Police arrested Saturday a man who allegedly pointed a gun at another man who had asked him for a cigarette in western Garapan.

Detective Simon Manacop served the arrest warrant on Ji Jing Borja, 22, alias Jimmy, in San Jose, Tinian, Saturday morning.

Borja, an employee of Duty Free Shoppers in Garapan, was taken to the Superior Court yesterday morning on charges of assault with a dangerous weapon, assault, illegal possession of a firearm, and disturbing the peace. His bail was set at $10,750 cash.

Associate judge Kenneth Govendo found Borja ineligible for a court-appointed counsel. Preliminary hearing will be on Jan. 19, 2012 at 9am.

Police officers had responded to western Garapan on Wednesday at 10:52pm after receiving a call for a possible attempted murder.

Witnesses allegedly told police that Borja had pointed a handgun at victim Jerry Sammy and that a security personnel was able to take the weapon away from Borja. Officers recovered the gun, a Ruger P89 9mm with one 15-round empty magazine.

According to the victim's statement to police, he had gone behind GIG Discotheque when he saw a Chinese man, later identified as Borja, walking out from Riu Jin Store. The victim said he asked Borja to give him a cigarette, but the suspect told him he doesn't have any. When Sammy insisted that he could see a pack of cigarettes in his hand, Borja ignored him and walked to his vehicle. A few seconds later, Sammy said he saw Borja pointing a handgun at his face. Borja allegedly threatened the victim that he was going to kill him if he sees him in Garapan again.

A security personnel then came and grabbed the gun from Borja, who kept asking the security personnel to give him back his gun. When the security personnel walked away, Borja walked into his vehicle and drove off.

The security personnel said that Borja, whom he met two months ago, would always hang out in the area because his girlfriend is the manager of a massage parlor.

The security personnel identified Borja in a photo lineup shown him by police. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Man in gun possession case taken into Marshal's custody

An ex-convict who was indicted in federal court for possession of a firearm and ammunition was remanded into the custody of the U.S. Marshal on Friday.

Justin A. Funkugub appeared in the U.S. District Court for the NMI with his court-appointed counsel, Ramona Quichocho, late Friday afternoon for his initial appearance.

Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona set Funkugub's detention hearing and arraignment for Thursday, Jan. 12 at 1:30pm.

The indictment charged Funkugub with one count of felon in possession of a firearm; one count of possession of a firearm with a removed, altered, or obliterated serial number; and one count of felon in possession of ammunition.

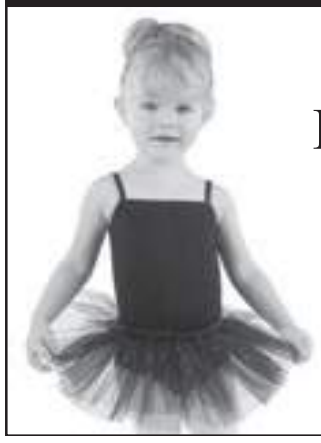
According to the indictment filed Thursday, Funkugub was convicted on Sept. 21, 2000, in the Superior Court of cattle killing, which is punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year.

On Oct. 11, 2011, the defendant allegedly possessed one Smith and Wesson, Model 12-3, .38 caliber snub-nose revolver. The revolver's manufacturer's serial number had been removed, altered, or obliterated, a violation of U.S. Code, according to the indictment.

That same date, Funkugub also allegedly possessed ammunition: six Winchester Super-X .22 caliber bullets.

The Office of the Attorney General had charged the 35-year-old Funkugub with assault and battery, unlawful possession of a firearm, unlawful possession of ammunition, and disturbing the peace, over the alleged assault of a relative and firing a handgun in As Teo area on Oct. 11, 2011. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Glushko's Academy of Performing Arts



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Businesses, groups volunteer for JA program

CLARISSA V. DAVID
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REPORTER

Local businesses and organizations have expressed support for the CNMI Public School System's Junior Achievement Company Program.

Program coordinator Carline B. Sablan said yesterday that several companies and groups have volunteered to be in charge of teaching and training high school students for the program, which aims to cultivate work-readiness, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy through practical or hands-on experience.

"We have commitments for all high schools on Saipan and Tinian," Sablan told *Saipan Tribune*.

She disclosed that Phillip Mendiola-Long of the Tinian Chamber of Commerce will be responsible for participants from Tinian High School while the Rotary Club of Saipan is in charge of Marianas High School.

Sablan said a group of at least four companies that include IP&E and Triple J Enterprises have teamed up for trainees from Saipan Southern High School. The Small Business Development Center also formed a team of two or three businesses to supervise Kagman High School students.

Another coordinator, Frances Ulloa of PSS, said in a separate interview that Bill Hocog is in charge of Rota High School trainees.

Ulloa noted that while there will be 25 trainees from each of the public high school on Saipan, there will be fewer participants from Tinian and Rota due to the schools' lower population.

Once the list of trainees and volunteers is finalized, Ulloa said they will begin with the orientation and other activities for the program.

GOP

From Page 1

we have to do is secure the border," said Frank Sharry, executive director of America's Voice, a Washington group that wants immigration enforcement to focus on serious criminals and national security threats.

The issue is likely to heat up in the next two weeks as the candidate campaign in South Carolina's first-in-the-South Republican primary Jan. 21.

Illegal immigration has long been a hot-button topic in South Carolina, where U.S. Sen. Jim DeMint was lionized by Republican activists for his leading role in killing 2007 reform legislation he branded as amnesty.

Conservative radio commentator Rush Limbaugh mocked U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., as "Senator Grahamnesty" for his efforts to pass the measure, and Graham has since adopted harder positions on illegal immigration.

Now, a federal judge has blocked a South Carolina immigration-enforcement law that was to have taken effect Jan. 1.

Sharry, other pro-immigration advocates and Hispanic lawmakers criticized former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney last week for saying that as president, he would veto the Dream Act, a bill that would provide legal residency to illegal immigrants who attend college or serve in the military, and who entered the country before they were 16.

Charlie Black, a North Carolina native and prominent Republican consultant who ran President Ronald Reagan's winning 1980 campaign, now is advising Romney.

Black acknowledged that Romney's hard-line immigration stance runs counter to Reagan, who granted the nation's last broad amnesty, and to Black's support for comprehensive reforms providing a path to legal residency.

"That's the right thing to do, but I'm not running for president and Romney is," Black told McClatchy. "He's entitled to his own view, and I support him."

While Romney used the immigration issue to skewer Texas Gov. Rick Perry in an early debate, other influential Republicans have warned about reversing the inroads that Reagan, President George W. Bush and 2008 GOP nominee John McCain made among Hispanics, the country's fastest-growing demographic group with 21.7 million eligible voters—almost three times the number in 1988.

"The Republican Party has to discuss 1/8immigration3/8 in as humane a way as possible," McCain told CNN last month. "We have to have empathy, we have to have concern and we have to have a plan."

Former Bush adviser Karl Rove and former House Republican leader Dick Armey also have warned against alienating Hispanics.

Their advice has not been heeded.

Former Sen. Rick Santorum's calls for mass deportations and opposition to any leniency helped him in Iowa, where he came within eight votes of defeating Romney in last week's GOP caucuses.

Romney and other rivals pilloried former House Speaker Newt Gingrich for saying in a November debate that undocumented workers who've been in the country for decades should be given a chance to gain legal status.

Under attack, Gingrich issued an "immigration fact sheet" detailing his past tough stances. He flew to South Carolina and declared his support for the state's new enforcement law, now enjoined by a federal judge.

An MSNBC poll last month of likely voters in South Carolina's presidential primary showed them split over a key issue, with 46 percent backing and 48 opposing "limited amnesty for some illegal immigrants."

DeMint introduced a bill in November to prevent the Justice Department from suing South Carolina, Arizona, Alabama, Georgia and other states that have passed toughened immigration laws.

"It's absurd that the Obama administration, which has failed to enforce the nation's immigration laws, is now stopping (states) from taking common-sense steps to protect citizens and uphold the law," DeMint said. "South Carolina has a duty to uphold the law and to protect our citizens from criminals who are in the country illegally."

Those states have suffered setbacks in federal courts. In the most recent ruling, U.S. District Judge Richard M. Gergel last month suspended provisions of the South Carolina law that criminalize the failure to carry immigration papers, and requiring police to check the status of people they stop and suspect of being in the country illegally.

"The weight of the federal courts has sided undeniably with the Department of Justice and against those conservative legislators bent on pursuing a starvation strategy against their states' undocumented population," said Angela Kelly, an immigration analyst with the Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank in Washington.

The U.S. Supreme Court will take up Arizona's law later this year in a potential decision that will likely be applied to other states.

Hispanic lawmakers and advocates find irony in the claims by DeMint, Romney,

Santorum and other Republicans that Obama has been soft on illegal immigration.

The federal government deported a record 395,000 foreigners in 2009 and 387,000 in 2010, compared with 189,000 in 2001 and 165,000 in 2002—George W. Bush's first two years in office.

The number of illegal immigrants in the United States has dropped to 11.2 million from its peak of 12 million in 2007.

It fell in South Carolina from 70,000 to 55,000 in the same period and from 375,000 to 325,000 in North Carolina, according to the Pew Hispanic Center, a Washington policy group.

The number of people apprehended by the U.S. Border Patrol while trying to enter the country illegally plummeted to 340,000 last year, one-fifth its peak of nearly 1.7 million in 2000.

"It indicates that fewer people are trying to come over," Sharry said. "It's mostly because of the (poor) economy and because enforcement has become more effective."

Meanwhile, GOP presidential candidates don't seem to have noticed the decline. Their attacks on illegal immigration, some analysts say, could sabotage a chance to cut into Obama's political base.

SUSPENSION

From Page 1

from the agency.

Villagomez said that when the Fund is no longer able to pay benefits, it is projected that the Legislature will need to appropriate about $80 million from the annual budget just to pay for current benefit obligations. This amount is projected to increase to $100 million around 2025 before it begins to decline, assuming that there's no new money that comes in to the Fund.

"If the Fund withdraws less than $53 million, the Fund might be able to sustain benefit payouts longer into the future, all other factors [being] held constant," he explained.

Villagomez said that Public Law 6-17, which was enacted in 1989, was a reform measure that created the Fund based on actuarial sound principals. A key factor in this reform was the closing of Class II membership and establishment of the Class I membership. Class II membership was determined as "too generous in benefits and unsustainable" while Class I membership offers more conservative benefits. This law set the retirement age at 62 and reduced benefits for each year below that age, among other things.

Meantime, Public Law 15-70, allows Class I members the option to retire early below the age of 62 without a reduction in benefits. This option, according to Villagomez, although temporary, basically allows Class I members to retire with Class II "like" benefits, which is contrary to P.L. 6-17. HB 17-204 proposes to make this option permanent, "which is the exact opposite of reform toward securing some level of benefits for all."

For Villagomez, the bill is unfair because some Class I members will be able to avail of the early retirement option provided by P.L. 15-70 while others will not. He cited the same case with House Bill 17-226, which allows members to withdraw their contributions from the pension agency without severance of employment or penalties.

"How are we going to fund the benefits of current retirees and new retirees after the Fund runs out of money in less than three years?" asked Villagomez, adding that due to the financial emergency situation of the Fund and retirees, he recommended that early retirement be suspended in its entirety until there is sufficient money to support its reactivation.

As of Dec. 27, 2011 the Fund's portfolio had an estimated value of only $256.7 million.

MAÑAGAHA

From Page 1

Mañagaha, a world renowned snorkeling site, is visited by over 60 percent of all tourists who come to the CNMI annually.

Some of the businesses affected by the DPL notice said yesterday they would like the department to reconsider.

DPL Secretary Oscar M. Babauta said yesterday it's unfair to Tasi Tours to allow other businesses to pick up tourists on Mañagaha for water sports, when Tasi Tours has a special recreational concession agreement with DPL.

DPL issued the notices from December to last week.

Babauta, in his letters to the affected businesses, cited a provision in the agreement for special recreational concession for Mañagaha, which states that "concessionaires shall have exclusive right to operate all commercial concessions on Mañagaha Island during the term of this agreement. The term 'commercial concessions' includes the right to…the conduct of tours on the island and from the island…"

The DPL secretary said only the concessionaire, or Tasi Tours, "can conduct tours on Mañagaha Island or from Mañagaha Island."

"When tourists are picked up on Mañagaha Island to go on a marine sport tour, whether it's parasailing, banana boating or the like, they are taking a tour 'from the island'. If the tour is sold by a company other than the concessionaire, the concessionaire's exclusive right to operate all commercial concessions on Mañagaha Island has been violated. It should be noted that this is regardless of whether the tourist is returned to Mañagaha or taken back to Saipan after the water sports tour," Babauta said.

Ray Cruz, director of compliance at DPL, said they issued 16 letters to beach concessionaries with DPL permits and four other operators, for a total of 20 letters.

Babauta said that failure to comply with the notice could result in the revocation of DPL permits if they have one, or permanent ban from operating water sports on public lands, among other things.

In his letter, he said DPL expects and requires all persons to abide by the 1993 rule that says all commercial activities on Mañagaha Island "shall be provided by one concessionaire only."

"We have sent this letter to all beach concessionaires and marine sports operators so that everyone will have a clear understanding of this rule," he added.

Adonis Santos, president of Auto Marine Inc., said they hope DPL will reconsider.

"We don't solicit customers on Mañagaha. They've booked the water sports with us so what we do is provide them parasailing, for example, and then give them time to relax before their next water sports so we drop them on Mañagaha, and pick them up later for their next activity. They pay $5 on Mañagaha," Santos said.

Santos said Auto Marine Inc. has been in operation for 16 years and this is the first time that they're told they can no longer pick up their customers from Mañagaha for water sports.

DPL's Babauta said these businesses need not lose revenue because they can still provide the same water sports activity services to the same tourists, but not when they're already on Mañagaha.

"They can provide the water sports activities before or after the tourists go to Mañagaha," Babauta said.

Santos said they have complied with the DPL notice since they received it on Jan. 5, but this has been affecting the tourists who now have to do all the water sports in succession instead of having relaxation time on Mañagaha in between water sports.

When it rains, for example, some tourists put off doing any water sport and stay on Mañagaha while waiting for the weather to clear up. When the rain stops, they are picked up from Mañagaha for their chosen water sports. That was before DPL issued the notice.

"It will be difficult for tourists and us," said Santos, whose Auto Marine Inc. offers parasailing, sea walker, banana boat ride, snorkeling and Mañagaha transfer services since 1996. He said they have an average of 80 customers daily, mostly Japanese, Chinese, and Korean tourists.

Cora Pangelinan, co-owner of Island Marine Sports Inc., said even before DPL issued written notices, they had already received verbal notice as early as April 2011.

"We're the first victim of that policy," she said, adding that they have complied with the policy anyway.

Effective Sept. 1, 2006, Tasi Tours' concession rights to Mañagaha Island was renewed for 10 more years.

At the time, Tasi Tours already paid its concession fees for the first five years, totaling $1.5 million.

Mañagaha Island sits at the entrance of Tanapag Harbor frequented by tourists from Japan, South Korea, China and other places. It is also a favorite weekend destination among local residents for its pristine beaches and cultural significance.

Vice speaker will be joining Fitial in the Republican Party

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

House Vice Speaker Felicidad Ogumoro (Cov-Saipan) said yesterday she's seeking re-election this November under Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's Republican Party, bringing to at least three the number of incumbent lawmakers shifting political parties.

House floor leader George Camacho (Ind-Saipan) and Rep. Ray Basa (Cov-Saipan) earlier confirmed they are joining the governor, now the president of the Republican Party.

"I believe in the governor's leadership. I want to continue working with him to accomplish our mission of turning the CNMI economy around and to make this a self-governing Commonwealth," she said.

Ogumoro

Ogumoro said her formal letter to the governor will be forthcoming.

Rep. Ralph Demapan (Cov-Saipan) separately said yesterday he's staying with the Covenant Party.

Rep. Edmund Villagomez (Cov-Saipan), for his part, said he has yet to decide whether he will seek re-election and if so, under which political party.

Fitial gave a Dec. 30 deadline to those he sent letters to or personally asked to join him in the GOP. The governor rejoined the Republican Party in January 2011—10 years after leaving it to form his own Covenant Party in 2001 to support his gubernatorial bid, which he won on his second attempt.

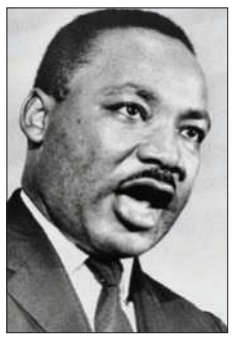
While Fitial and others have rejoined the Republican Party, Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos has remained with the Covenant Party, making it the first time in CNMI history that the governor and lieutenant governor belong to two different political parties.

Other lawmakers, including Rep. Ray Palacios (Cov-Saipan), said they have yet to make a decision whether to remain with their current party or join the governor's GOP.

Group gears up for upcoming celebration of MLK Day

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The African-American Cultural Preservation Committee on Saipan will host a series of lectures, presentations, and other activities in celebration of the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Jan. 16.


King

AACPC president Joe Hill said they will have a "very full program this year" to commemorate the work and contributions of the American clergyman who became a prominent leader in the African-America Civil Rights Movement.

This year's theme, "Being Drum Majors for Justice: Keeping Up the Beat in the Marianas," will be discussed in detail by keynote speaker, Dr. Amos C. Brown, a renowned civil rights advocate, activist, orator, and student of King.

Brown worked intimately with King, Clarence Mitchell, Medgar Evers, and Jesse Jackson in promoting non-violent activism in the '60s, having been jailed twice along with King. He is a recognized civil rights leader whose particular focus is on the rights of blacks, women, and the Jewish community.

Brown is noted for having given the "most eloquent, convincing, cogent, and damnable pill of particulars" in testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee against Clarence Thomas' appointment to the Supreme Court.

Brown's schedule of activities on Thursday include a presentation at the Saipan Community School on the role of the youth in the civil rights movement; a special "Tribute to Martin Luther King Jr." to be aired from 10am to 11am on KKMP 1440 AM and 92.1 FM; and a civil rights movement presentation for the *man'amko* at the Aging Center.

On Friday, Brown will conduct a presentation titled "The Use to Public Speaking Skills to Affect Social Change" to the students of the National Forensic League at the Marianas High School.

The next day, Jan. 14, Brown will be at the Northern Marianas College for a presentation on the history of the civil rights movement.

This Sunday, Brown will guest at the "Your Humanities Half-Hour" which airs at 2pm on Power 99.5 FM and hosted by Catherine Perry.

The event will be highlighted by a commemoration program at the American Memorial Park on Monday. The program will begin with a pre-march orientation and prayer featuring Brown and other original civil rights era members at the parking lot.

The Civil Rights era march will be re-enacted and estimated at 40 minutes, which will begin from the American Memorial Park south down Beach Road to Bank of Guam, then going back and taking a left on Coconut Street, then going right on Coral Tree Ave. and back to American Memorial Park where Brown will deliver his keynote address at the Visitors Center Theatre.

"It's a great opportunity for parents and students to spend healthy, quality time together experiencing the energy of a civil rights march in 2012 led by individuals who were actually there in the 1950s and 1960s," said AACPC's Ambrose Bennett.

Hill said AACPC is encouraging all students and parents to carry and display their favorite civil rights era march protest signs, banners, and mottos. Prizes and certificates for the top three winners for individuals and schools will be awarded during Brown's keynote program.

On Monday evening from 7:30pm to 9pm, Brown will host a reflections as well a question-and-answer session at the Pacific Islands Club Charley's Cabaret dubbed, "An Evening with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., As I Knew Him."

The next day, Jan. 17, Brown will guest once again at KKMP, this time for the "Fino Man'amko" talk show from 10am to 11am.

The Humanities Council is the main sponsor for this year's celebration. Other sponsors are Aquarius Beach Tower, Hyatt Regency Saipan, and Pacific Islands Club.

For more information, contact Hill at 234-7743 or 6806 or email joe.hill@saipan.com, or AACPC secretary Ellen Delos Santos at 285-2847.

Finu' Chamorro schedule out

The new TV show Finu Chamorro will be shown on Channel 7 ABC 7 every Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, from 6:30pm to 7pm.

SHOWTIME

- Every Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, from 6:30pm to 7pm on Channel 7 ABC 7
- New episode will be from GTC starting Jan. 16

This program, which aims to make the CNMI's indigenous Chamorro language accessible to everyone in their living room, will feature appearances by representatives from the Public School Systems, parents and students cast in *Finu Chamorro*, and possible sponsors.

Finu Chamorro isn't just for the local people; the season began with a Christmas special, so anyone wanting to learn the Chamorro language can watch it. It will be done in an easy format with a great flow in the lessons. If you're married to a Chamorro and want to be able to speak to them and their relatives in their native language or if you're a student needing to practice, this TV show is for everyone!

Finu' Chamorro is produced by Digital Motions, Edwin Sta. Theresa, Kevin Jardinero, and Bernard Rivera as well as Public School System's Lumi Bermudes. ***(PR)***

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Delegation approves $3M for Tinian's FY 2012 budget

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The Tinian and Aguiguan Legislative Delegation passed a $3 million municipal budget for fiscal year 2012 that includes $527,000 for public programs such as $160,000 in retroactive pay for over 100 government employees and no work hour cuts for covered personnel, during a session that lasted around 10pm on Thursday.

Tinian lawmakers originally set aside only $80,000 for the retroactive pay but later doubled the amount. Delegation members spent days finalizing the budget bill and held a session until late Thursday night to pass it.

The local budget bill is now with the Tinian Municipal Council chaired by Patrick A. Manglona, before heading to Gov. Benigno R. Fitial for action.

Senate Vice President Jude Hofschneider (R-Tinian), head of the delegation, said yesterday he's optimistic that the municipal council will concur with the budget bill for the governor's approval.

Hofschneider said if all goes according to plan, this will be the first time that a Tinian will have a municipal budget since fiscal year 2006.

Tinian Mayor Ramon Dela Cruz separately said yesterday that no budget is perfect but hopes that the projected revenue of $3 million will really be achieved.

Hofschneider

Dela Cruz said he was projecting that only $2.3 million to $2.5 million in revenue will be generated from the casino industry in fiscal year 2012, an amount closer to the $1.2 million in actual collection in 2011.

"The delegation is optimistic, but I want to be on the conservative side. Last fiscal year, we had two months of almost no revenue, and if that thing happen again, we won't have $3 million collection," he said.

Nevertheless, Dela Cruz said the Tinian leadership promised to pass an annual budget and they are fulfilling that promise.

Rep. Trenton Conner (R-Tinian) said he's comfortable with the budget bill. Besides Conner and Hofschneider, the other delegation members are Sens. Frank Cruz (R-Tinian) and Henry San Nicolas (Cov-Tinian).

Under Tinian Local Bill 17-1, DS1, there will no longer be continuing resolution and the leadership has to pass a balanced fiscal year 2013 budget by Oct. 1, 2012.

The budget bill's total estimated revenue for fiscal year 2012 is $3,026,250.

Of this amount, $2.5 million comes from casino tax revenue, $500,000 from Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino's casino license fee, $20,250 from device fees, and $6,000 from employee fees.

The bill gives $527,000 to seven special programs, including $200,000 for the Tinian Municipal Scholarship, $160,000 for retroactive pay, $70,000 for the Tinian Medical Assistance Program, $50,000 for educational programs, $22,000 for community programs and $5,000 for senior citizens program.

This appropriations bill covers personnel and operations cost of the Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission, Tinian Municipal Treasurer, the Office of the Mayor of Tinian and Aguiguan, and the Tinian Municipal Council.

'Awareness campaigns behind spike in reporting of domestic abuse cases'

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
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REPORTER

Karidat executive director Angie V. Guerrero noted that more people are now reporting domestic violence and sexual abuse cases, citing awareness campaigns as an important tool in educating the community about the importance of reporting such incidents.

Guerrero

In 2010 alone, Guerrero disclosed that 70 individuals sought the assistance of Karidat to file temporary restraining orders against their abusive partners. This is about 19-percent increase from the 59 individuals who asked for help in 2009.

Guerrero noted, however, that their numbers do not include cases handled by the Family Violence Intervention Center on Capital Hill.

Guerrero believes that the public is becoming aware of the negative impacts of domestic violence in the community.

"Maybe because more awareness campaigns are being conducted, that's why people are coming out of the closet and they're not feeling alone so they are reporting more of the domestic violence that's happening," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

Still, Guerrero continues to hope for a violence-free community that she said is possible by having respect for others.

"Do unto others what you want others do unto you. That's the Golden Rule. If everybody abides by that, we could be one happy, violence-free community," she added.

CERVICAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

2011 Miss Liberation Day Queen Joni Castro, left, lights a candle while Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s Roxanne Diaz look on during the signing of a proclamation declaring January 2012 Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. Inos urges all women in the CNMI to discuss a preventive and screening program with their healthcare provider and become aware that they are at risk of getting cervical cancer.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Ex-SHEFA consultant appeals to Fund board

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

A former consultant of the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance program, Jesusa B. Dris, has been given more time to respond to a recommendation that the NMI Retirement Fund seek a summary judgment in the case it filed against her.

Dris appealed during the public comment section of the Fund's board meeting on Friday, requesting that she be allowed to further review, be heard, and to make a response to the findings made by hearing officer Edward Manibusan.

Dris admitted that she failed to get the emailed documents regarding the case as she had a family emergency that she needed to attend to in Las Vegas in October last year.

Fund counsel Viola Alepuyo earlier told the board that administrative hearing officer Manibusan has already sent his recommended decision to the board for action, which is the filing of summary judgment in Dris' case.

Manibusan confirmed with *Saipan Tribune* that he has already made a recommendation in the case but he declined to further comment on the issue, saying the case is still under litigation.

A summary judgment is a request for a decision by a court of the matters submitted to it, based upon legal arguments only, where no material facts are in dispute. A motion for summary judgment can be granted to resolve disputes involving legal interpretation, but not disputes regarding material facts.

Board chair Sixto K. Igisomar said yesterday that the trustees approved Dris' request for more time and instructed their legal counsel to communicate their decision to her. He refused to comment further, saying he has yet to read Manibusan's "recommended action."

The Fund sued Dris and three other individuals in May last year after they questioned the Fund's authority to conduct a double-dipping investigation against them. The Fund's hearing examiner had subpoenaed these individuals but they all refused to appear.

The Fund wants the Superior Court to declare that it has the authority to gather information necessary to conduct its operations. That authority, the Fund said, includes interrogatories, requests for production of documents, taking depositions, and compelling attendance at depositions, hearings, and administrative proceedings.

The Office of the Public Auditor had instructed the Fund in April 2008 to look into whether Dris and other former consultant, both retirees, were double-dipping.

Double dipping means collecting pension checks and drawing salaries from the government at the same time. It is prohibited under CNMI retirement law.

MEETING FOR ALL FARMERS
WHO WANT TO MAKE MORE MONEY
WEDNESDAY
JANUARY 11TH AT 5:30PM

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- DO YOU WANT A GUARANTEED SALE?
- DO YOU WANT TO SELL OUTSIDE OF LOCAL SAIPAN MARKET?
- DO YOU WANT TO RECEIVE PAYMENTWITH DELIVERY?

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NORTHERN MARIANAS TRADE INSTITUTE
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PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Tinian Municipal Scholarship Board hereby gives notice that there will be a Board Meeting on Friday, January 13, 2012 at 3:00 p.m. at the Mayor's Office Conference Room, 1st Floor, in San Jose Village, Tinian.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary
- a. Call to Order
- b. Roll Call
- c. Adoption of Agenda
- d. Adoption of Minutes

II. Public Comments[1]
III. Executive Session[2]
IV. Unfinished Business
V. New Business
- a. Election of Officers
- b. Policies and Regulations of the Tinian Municipal Scholarship Board
- c. Establishment of By-Laws
- d. Memorandum of Agreement Revision
- e. Disbursement of Spring 2012 Term Awards

VI. Miscellaneous Matters
VII. Discussion of Agenda for Next Board meeting
- a. Deadline for Fall 2012 Term

VIII. Adjournment

[1]We ask that remarks be limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments.
[2]Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Board may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP12-DEQ-009

SUBMISSION: FEBRUARY 02, 2012 • TIME: 2:00 P.M.

"PESTICIDE SAFETY AND EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR THE DIVISION ON ENVIROMENTAL QUALITY"

THE SCOPE OF WORK FOR THIS PROJECT WILL BE AVAILABLE ON OR AFTER JANUARY 03, 2012 AT THE DEQ OFFICE OR CAN BE RECEIVED ELECTRONICALLY BY E-MAIL REQUEST TO **reinacamacho@deq.gov.mp.**

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS PROJECT MAY BE FAXED TO MS. REINA CAMACHO (670) 664-8540 OR BY E-MAIL TO **reinacamacho@deq.gov.mp** NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS, **JANUARY 23, 2012.**

THIS IS A FEDERALLY FUNDED PROJECT; AS SUCH, LOCAL PREFERENCE ***IS NOT AVAILABLE*** BECAUSE ITS USE IS PROHIBITED BY FEDERAL LAW GRANTING FUNDING FOR THIS PROJECT.

/S/ FRANK M. RABAULIMAN
DIRECTOR, DEQ

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PACIFIC BRIEFS

Am. Samoa government may not meet payroll

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI)—The American Samoa governor Togiola Tulafono has advised government workers that they many not get their paychecks at the end of the week if there isn't enough money in the government's coffers. The payroll is about $4 million every two weeks. Speaking on his weekend radio program, Togiola says he was informed last week by the Treasury Department about a drop in customs revenue, placing the government's payroll in serious jeopardy. He says customs revenues always drop towards the end of the year and the beginning of the new year, and this is coupled with the three payrolls last month taking up additional reserves. Togiola says there is an uncertainty at this point if there will be enough funds to cover the payroll.

Cook Islands may get new domestic airline

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI)—Plans are underway in the Cook Islands to establish a new domestic airline. Kia Orana Air is planning to secure land space at Rarotonga's international airport complex. The company says it will bid on a piece of land with the hope of launching its first flight sometime this year. Director Mark Lusby says the aspiring airline is putting in a tender for a section of land in the airport grounds that is currently being advertised for tender by the Cook Islands Airport Authority. He says Kia Orana Air will not be able to function until it is allocated some land for a hanger and offices at the airport. Cook Islands news reports the Airport Authority chief executive, Joseph Ngamata, saying there is more than one company interested in the land.

Vanuatu to initiate firearm registration

PORT VILA, Vanuatu (Vanuatu Daily Post/PIR)—In the wake of the sudden tragic death of Recognised Seasonal Employers scheme Licensee Dick Eade, the acting Director General of Internal Affairs and same time Commissioner of Labour Lionel Kaluat will launch the Firearms Census program on the upcoming project of registering firearms throughout Vanuatu today. The Firearms Census Team under the Vanuatu Police Force have organised a conference for the press from 9-10am today where an introduction to the launching will be delivered by the Commissioner of Police before the official launching by the Acting Internal Affairs DG. The rate of firearm-related mortality, injury and crime in Vanuatu is uncommon. Unlicensed possession of a firearm or ammunition carries a fine of Vt20, 000 (or less) and/or six months imprisonment.

New Caledonia urged to absorb Wallis and Futuna

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI)—A veteran New Caledonian politician has suggested that the French Pacific territory Wallis and Futuna be made New Caledonia's fourth province. Pierre Bretegnier has told Noumea's daily newspaper that the two islands are being emptied, with the majority of its people now living in New Caledonia's southern province. Bretegnier says the French state has not cared about economic development in Wallis and Futuna and by default it's been up to New Caledonia to deal with the issue. Such a change, he says, would allow New Caledonia to organise its relations with the two islands which would help the economy. Bretegnier also says imbalances within New Caledonia continue, with the pro-independence Northern and Loyalty Islands provinces being financially carried by the French state and the southern province.

French Polynesia police arrest bank robber

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI)—Police in French Polynesia have made an arrest following last Tuesday's bank robbery in Pirae. They have detained a 32-year-old man at his home on suspicion of stealing just over 10,000 dollars from the Banque de Polynesie. According to press reports, he has admitted to the hold-up but reports say the money is yet to be located. Police had asked for the public's help in tracking a blue Mini Cooper which was the getaway vehicle. The car reportedly belonged to an acquaintance of the suspect. The robbery coincided with another one in central Papeete where a man armed with a knife was still inside the Socredo Bank when nearby police arrested him. Bank robberies in French Polynesia are extremely rare.

HONORING A HERO CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Free and Accepted Masons of Emon Lodge No. 179 flank Philippine Consul General Medardo Macaraig and other guests at the brief ceremony honoring the 115th death anniversary of Philippine national hero Jose P. Rizal on Dec. 30, 2011. The event featured a flag-raising ceremony and the reading of Rizal's biography and works.

BEFORE THE COMMONWEALTH PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
ELECTRIC DIVISION — DOCKET 09-1
WATER AND WASTEWATER DIVISIONS — DOCKET 12-01

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that at 10:00 a.m. on January 21, 2012, the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission *[Commission]* will conduct a public hearing at the Retirement Fund Building Conference Room, Capitol Hill to receive evidence, argument, discussion and public comment on the following regulatory matters concerning the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation *[CUC]*.

1. CUC Electric Division [Docket 09-1].

The Commission will examine CUC's December 8, 2011 petition for base rate relief, which requests that effective on or about February 20, 2012 its electric base rate revenues *[which do not include fuel revenue, as discussed below]* be increased on an annualized basis by about $7.9 million, which would increase the average residential ratepayer's monthly electric bill by about $6.87. CUC proposes that the additional revenue to be produced by this rate increase be allocated to its three customer classes *[residential, commercial and government]* in the manner set forth in its public notice, as published in the *Saipan Tribune* and *Marianas Variety* on December 21, 2011. CUC asserts that this increased base revenue is just, reasonable and necessary to enable it to address: a] the statutory mandate that it bill and collect adequate rate revenue to recover the costs associated with the operation and delivery of electric service, including financial reserves; b] the requirements of the Federal Stipulated Order dated March 11, 2009, in *USA* v. *CUC* and *CNMI*; c] declining revenues resulting from decreased loads; and d]additional revenue requirements imposed by Retirement Fund assessments; CDA payments and Telesource Change Order No. 5.

The Commission will also consider at the hearing the following requests by the Electric Division for regulatory action: a] amendment of the levelized energy adjustment clause [LEAC] tariff, as established by Commission order dated December 19, 2008, in order to transition to a monthly rate and to authorize the establishment of separate LEAC rates for each customer class; b] establishment of a new LEAC rate to be effective January 27, 2012 of $0.29579 per kWh; c] reconciliation of all prior LEAC assessments through September 30, 2011; d] establishment of a new street lighting tariff with the following monthly rates: long arm $11.67; short arm $8.33; and LED $10.83, which should apply to all public and private security lighting customers; e] approval of the Independence Bank loan; f] establishment of a new net metering tariff; g] establishment of a new municipal pumping station customer class; h] approval of a memorandum of understanding between CUC and the CNMI government regarding the payment of outstanding utility bills; i] approval of a security services contract; j] amendment of the contract review protocol, as established by Commission order dated December 19, 2008; and k] further suspension of CUC's duty to comply with statutory renewable energy portfolio standards under 4 CMC §8624(b).

2. CUC Water and Wastewater Divisions [Docket 12-01].

The Commission will also examine CUC's October 10, 2011 petition to increase its water and wastewater rates, effective on or about February 20, 2012. CUC proposes an increase to its unmetered water fixed charge and to its wastewater monthly service fee and volumetric charges, in amounts set forth in its December 21, 2011 public notice. In addition, CUC proposes that new water and wastewater energy charges be established, which would enable these divisions to pass through to customers the actual cost of their electricity expense. CUC estimates that the initial water energy charge would be $2.11 per 1,000 gallons and that the initial wastewater energy charge would be $2.68 per 1,000 gallons. The aggregate impact of these proposed increases on the average monthly residential water bill would be about $6.73 and about $34.11 on the average monthly residential wastewater bill. CUC asserts these proposed water and wastewater rate increases are just, reasonable and necessary.

The Commission will also consider at the hearing the following additional requests by the Divisions for regulatory action: a] the establishment of three new water and wastewater customer classes: multi-family customers; municipal pumping customers; and public school system; b] a new $50 sewer dumping charge; c] a new $50 wastewater inspection/testing charge; d] the November 8, 2011 petition of Senator Juan Ayuyu for establishment of a $0.25 per thousand gallon agricultural water usage rate for commercial farmers and ranchers in areas where there is 24 hour water available and a flat $25 monthly rate in areas where 24 hour water service is not available; and e] several amendments to its service rules and regulations, as discussed in CUC's December 21, 2011 public notice.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION regarding these rate petitions and requests for regulatory action, the public is referred to: a] CUC's December 21, 2011 notice, as published in the Marianas Variety and in the Saipan Tribune; and b] the testimony and documentary evidence, which is available for public review at CUC's administrative office on the 3rd floor, Joeten Dandan Building and at its Tinian and Rota offices. The Commission has tasked its independent regulatory consultant *[Georgetown]* to investigate and comment on the above CUC requests. As a result this review and in furtherance a prehearing conference between CUC and Georgetown, they will present by stipulation, at the January 21, 2012 public hearing, joint recommendations for Commission action on the above CUC requests. This stipulation will be available for public inspection on and after January 19, 2012 at the offices of Georgetown's legal counsel, Mr. Robert Torres, Esq. Plata Drive, Whispering Palms, Saipan—phone number 670-234-7859 and will also be available at the public hearing.

THE COMMISSION WELCOMES THE PUBLIC'S ATTENDANCE at its January 21, 2012 public hearing and will welcome public comments at the conclusion of the hearing. Persons who desire to formally participate in the hearing pursuant to 4 CMC § 8409(j) should on or before January 17, 2012 file with the Commission at the offices of Mr. Robert Torres, Esq. *[see above contact information]* an application and offer of proof in accordance with 4 CMC §8409(j) and Commission Procedural Rule 11(c). Subsequent to the public hearing, the Commission will schedule, notice and conduct a special business meeting to consider and make decisions regarding matters considered at the public hearing. Further information about the public hearing and the public's right to participate may be obtained from the office of Mr. Robert Torres, Esq.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
CNMI Judicial Branch

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Judicial Branch is seeking a qualified and reliable individual for the position of:

DATA ENTRY CLERK (Saipan) – Information Technology Division

REQUIREMENTS: Candidate must have a high school diploma or equivalent and one (1) year experience working with computers.

ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS: Candidate must possess a valid CNMI driver's license, current police and traffic clearances, and proof of eligibility to work in the CNMI.

DUTIES: The candidate in this position will work under the direct supervision of the Superior Court Clerk and is expected to perform a variety of data entry assignments on the Superior Court's case management system. He or she will secure daily access to assigned computer terminal and/or database files by maintaining password and log on/off requirements; operate computer equipment; enter selected data from court files and related documents, perform other data entry functions; operate supporting computer equipment such as printers, scanners, etc. to produce printouts and reports; stamp, date, and initial information sheets provided for confirmation of data entry; review print-outs of data to confirm data accuracy; observe system operating procedures and guidelines when working with the caseload databases, various data entry software, and/or office machines; report computer message errors to immediate supervisor; maintain setting and cleanliness of designated computer monitor, keyboard, hard drive, station, printer, scanner, and other related office equipment, and perform other duties as assigned.

COMPENSATION AND TENURE: This is an ungraded position appointed and served at the pleasure of the Chief Justice. This is approximately a twenty two (22) week contract with wages paid bi-weekly at a $15,000 annual rate.

Resumes, a complete application, along with copies of police clearance and proof of eligibility to work in the CNMI should be addressed to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, at the Guma Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice, Susupe, P.O. Box 502165, Saipan, MP, 96950. Applications can be obtained at the OPM offices. Completed applications may also be submitted at the CNMI Supreme Court offices in Susupe. Resumes and applications must be submitted by 5:00p.m. on January 17th, 2012. For additional information about the position call (670) 236-9716. This job announcement can also be seen at http://www.justice.gov.mp

This project was supported by Grant Number 2009-SB-B9-0008 awarded to the CNMI Criminal Justice Planning Agency (CJPA) by the FY09 Northern Mariana Island Recovery Act: Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG), Formula Program, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice and the CNMI Government, and sub-granted by the CJPA Supervisory Council. The Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, coordinates the activities of the following program offices and bureaus: Bureau of Justice Assistance, Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Institute of Justice, Corrections Program Office, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office for Victims of Crime and Violence Against Women Office. Points of view or opinions contained within this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice or the CJPA Supervisory Council.

Judiciary denies that Castro had stroke

Castro

The CNMI Judiciary wishes to assure the public that, contrary to speculations, Associate Justice Alexandro C. Castro has not had a stroke. The Judiciary respects the privacy of all the justices, judges, and staff with respect to their health, and refrains from public discussion of such matters. The Judiciary appreciates the public's concern about Associate Justice Castro's well-being. ***(CNMI Judiciary)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Air Force training on Farallon de Medinilla

SANTA RITA, GUAM—The Air Force will conduct training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla on the following dates and times:

Jan. 11, from 9am to 4pm

Jan. 13, from 8am to 3pm

The public—especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine tour operators—are advised to stay clear from the area during the times and dates indicated.

The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla training area will be on a 10 nautical mile radius on all quadrants. ***(USN)***

Chamber Installation Dinner on Jan. 21

The 2012 Saipan Chamber of Commerce Officers and Directors Installation Dinner will be held this Jan. 21, 2012, at the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan's Hibiscus Hall. Jerry Tan, president of Tan Holdings, will be this year's keynote speaker. The Commerce will also announce its 2011 Businessperson of the Year award recipient. SCC will continue with its Installation Dinner tradition and hold a silent auction to raise funds for the Scholarship Awards Program.

The deadline for nominations for Businessperson of the Year Award has been extended to Jan. 9, 2012.

Reservations for the $50-per-head dinner are being accepted. Reserve seating for the event by calling the Saipan Chamber of Commerce offices at 233-7150/7152, or send an email to coordinator@saipanchamber.com. ***(SCC)***

First aid/CPR/AED training dates

- Adult CPR/AED: Jan. 11, Wednesday, 6pm-9pm
- First Aid: Jan. 12, Thursday, 6pm-9pm
- Adult CPR/AED: Jan. 14, Saturday, 8am-11am
- First Aid: Jan. 14, Saturday, 1pm-4pm
- Adult First Aid/CPR/AED: Jan. 21, Saturday, 8am-1pm
- Adult CPR/AED, Jan. 24, Tuesday, 6pm-9pm
- First Aid: Jan. 25, Wednesday, 6pm-9pm

Contact the American Red Cross-Northern Mariana Islands Chapter at 234-3459 to register. To learn more, visit www.redcross.org/training. ***(ARC)***

Nomination for 2012 ESGR

»Freedom Award nears deadline Guard, Reserve members urged to nominate supportive employers

The Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a Department of Defense agency, is accepting nominations for the 2012 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award.

All Guard and Reserve members are encouraged to nominate employers who have provided exceptional support of their military service. Nominations may be submitted by service members at www.FreedomAward.mil until Jan. 16, 2012.

The Freedom Award is the DoD's highest award for civilian employers supporting Guard and Reserve members.

"Even as our nation scales down our combat missions abroad, Guard and Reserve members and their employers remain a critical component in our national security equation," said James Rebholz, ESGR national chair. "Just as our country has heavily relied on the more than one million men and women of the Guard and Reserve, these service members have counted on their employers for support and encouragement. I encourage all Guardsmen and Reservists to nominate their supportive employers today, so our Nation may acknowledge their extraordinary efforts."

Last year, there were 19 nominations in Guam and the CNMI. Three local employers—Galaide Group, LLC, Hilton Guam Resort and Spa and the CNMI Public School System—were named semifinalists, or Top 148 of the over 4,049 nominations nationwide. Although they didn't win the coveted Freedom Award, their placement speaks volumes about employers in the Marianas region.

So far in 2012, there have been 18 nominations submitted: 14 for Guam and four for CNMI employers. They are:

- ASC Trust Corp.
- CNMI PSS-Oleai Elementary
- CNMI Public School System
- GDOE – Agueda Johnston MS
- GDOE – MU Lujan Elementary
- GDOE – Oceanview MS
- Guam Marriott Resort & Spa
- Guam Power Authority
- Home Depot Guam
- Hollywood Theatres Saipan
- Joeten Enterprises, Inc.
- Naval Hospital Guam
- Port Authority of Guam
- St. Joseph's Medical Transport
- Security Title, Inc.
- Tropical Beach House Guam (2)
- Transportation Security Administration

The Top 15 employers of 2012 will be announced by early summer and honored in Washington, D.C. during a special ceremony in September.

For questions regarding the Freedom Award, visit www.FreedomAward.mil or contact Capt. Josephine Blas at 671-735-0456 at the ESGR Guam-CNMI Office.

The Freedom Award was instituted in 1996 under the auspices of ESGR to recognize exceptional support from the employer community. In the years since, 160 employers have been honored with the award. ESGR was established in 1972 to develop and maintain employer support for Guard and Reserve service. ESGR advocates relevant initiatives, recognizes outstanding support, increases awareness of applicable laws, and resolves conflict between service members and employers.

Paramount to ESGR's mission is encouraging employment of Guardsmen and Reservists who bring integrity, global perspective and proven leadership to the civilian workforce. ***(ESGR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

DECEMBER'S TOP READERS

The magic of reading can take you anywhere and make you more aware. The San Antonio Elementary School wants to promote and praise the value of reading so it celebrates its top readers for every classroom every month. We want to thank parents, the staff, and the students for making this possible. The Reader of the Month for December are K-AM, Jerry Cao; K-PM, Mayvaleen Tesero; 1st -A, Tayshawna Lieto; 1st-B, Christina Atalig; 2nd –A, Brinae Cruz; 2nd-B, Shyma Rashid; 3rd-A, Shane Borja; 3rd-B, MJ De Belen; 4th-A, Andrea Roberto; 4th-B, Emelsha Cepeda; 5th-A, Franczeska Paner; 5th-B, Tommie Sablan; 5th-C, Dave Tanghal; 6th-A, William Sablan; and 6th-B, Melvin Kapileo. From organizers Miss Leora and Mrs. Manaloto.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Jan. 10, 2001

CDA notes modest property foreclosure

Despite the rising number of delinquent loans, the Commonwealth Development Authority has reported that it managed to minimize foreclosure of properties of remiss borrowers who now comprise more than 20 percent of the agency's overall clientele. However, Executive Director Marylou S. Ada said CDA may still be forced to forfeit properties of clients whose outstanding loans have not been performing in over two years unless they approach the agency and ask for a loan workout. Since the local economy started dipping in 1997 due to the Asian financial crisis, CDA has foreclosed mortgaged property of only seven borrowers who were not able to service monthly loan payment.

Wendy's files for bankruptcy

Two months after closure of its restaurant on Saipan, the local franchisee of the international fastfood chain Wendy's has filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy, claiming debts of over a quarter million dollars. Wendy's Saipan, Inc. president Charles Jordan filed the papers yesterday at the U.S. District Court following a decision by its board of stockholders last month. The company opened its lone restaurant on the island in 1996, but ceased its operation due to the prolonged economic difficulties confronting the CNMI, which resulted in financial losses for WSI.

Jan. 10, 2002

Pellegrino exits education board

Saipan member Anthony Pellegrino formally stepped down as State Board of Education chair on a memorable note, imparting a strong message on awakening students' consciousness beyond the perks of a government job. In his final speech during yesterday's inauguration of new BOE members, the outgoing board chief threw a challenge at his colleagues, saying that though local education has made remarkable strides in recent years, some problems still exist within the system. "One major problem still exists which few of us continue to overlook. And that is the attitude of our students towards the type of employment they desire upon completion of their basic education," said the long-time BOE member.

NMI awarded $91K in food, shelter funds

The US government chose the Northern Marianas to receive $91,715 in federal funds to supplement the Commonwealth's food and shelter programs. The selection was made by a National Board that is chaired by the Federal Emergency Management Administration and consists of representatives from The Salvation Army; American Red Cross; United Jewish Communities; Catholic Charities, USA; National Council of the Churches of Christ in the US; and the United Way of America, which will provide the administrative staff and function as fiscal agent. The Board was charged to distribute funds appropriated by Congress to help expand the capacity of food and shelter programs in high-need areas around the country.

Jan. 10, 2003

Legislators hope to resurrect 'cut work-hour' bill

House members whose votes failed to boost the passage of the government work-hour reduction bill are still hoping that the House majority will realize the exigency of the government's cash flow situation and throw its support behind the measure at the soonest possible time. Vice Speaker Manuel A. Tenorio-one of those who opposed the bill-however, maintained that there was no need to rush things. He added that the majority is still waiting for the administration to come out with its cost reduction proposal, which the latter was expected to share yesterday. The administration is eyeing nine different options to reduce government expenditure, according to public information officer Peter Callaghan. The spokesperson declined to name the options, which, he said, Gov. Juan N. Babauta was still discussing with his Cabinet.

Literacy confab participants down 50 percent

Whether it's the date or the venue, the huge drop in the number of participants to the 2nd annual Literacy and Family Conference left education officials scratching their heads. Registration records showed that only about 150 participants-mostly teachers-attended yesterday's conference, which was held at Kagman High School. Education deputy commissioner for instruction, curriculum, and assessment Rita A. Sablan, admitted that it was "quiet" this year. "It's quiet unlike the previous year but I think it's still doing good. People came and we appreciate their presence."

Arctic Circle sets meeting to buy produce from NMI farmers

Artic Circle Air will be holding a meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2011, at 5:30pm at the Northern Marianas Trade Institute in Lower Base for all CNMI farmers and ranchers who are interested in selling produce for export to Guam.

Other meetings will be held on Rota and Tinian to involve local farmers and ranchers. Artic Circle, which will be doing business as Marianas Harvest, will market produce to retailers, wholesalers, hotels and the U.S. military in Guam. Marianas Harvest plans to buy future delivery of produce with contract detailing type of produce, quantity, price, and delivery schedule.

Tony Pellegrino, president of Artic Circle Air, says, "Farmers can increase their income by selling future delivery produce. Farmers receive payment upon delivery to packing location at Lower Base against a signed contract. Marianas Harvest will handle the selling, packaging, shipping and collection." The company has retained long time agricultural consultant Isidoro T. Cabrera to coordinate purchases directly between farmers and Marianas Harvest. Cabrera will assist farmers to ensure delivery of produce per contact.

Pellegrino

Herman R. Gurrero, vice president of Community Relations, says that Artic Circle has the capacity of transporting 25,000 lbs of cargo on a weekly basis. "Our goal is to allocate to local farmers 60-70 percent of this cargo capacity. It will not happen overnight and that is why we are holding this meeting to introduce our program."

According to Guam import statistics, over $1.2 million worth of vegetables and over $800,000 worth of fruit were imported into Guam in March 2011. "This is monthly import. The CNMI has virtually no sales to our nearest large export market. Rota does more farm sales because it is closer to Guam and freight costs lower," said Pellegrino.

Pellegrino's belief is that for the local economy to grow, the CNMI needs to export and bring in more revenue. Guam has over three times the population of the CNMI and has three times the number of tourists. Total local Guam agricultural sales are only 12 percent higher than total CNMI farmer's sales, according to USDA Agricultural Census Report.

Farmers are encouraged to attend the meeting on Jan. 11 to learn how they can participate and increase sales. "Farmers and ranchers can aid in the CNMI's economic growth and development. We only have to start," said Pellegrino.

Important information will be provided and questions will be answered at the Wednesday meeting. ***(PR)***

'Miracle Worker' rehearsals in full swing

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Preparations are in full swing two weeks before the staging of *The Miracle Worker*, a Friends of the Arts production slated for Jan. 20 to 22 at the Marianas High School Dolphin Theatre.

The Miracle Worker is a three-act play based on the life of renowned writer and activist Helen Keller who was rendered blind, deaf, and consequently mute by an illness at a tender age. She learned about discipline and language through the use of her fingers from her governess and teacher Anne Sullivan.

The cast is composed of Anna Cavert, who will play the role of Helen Keller; Laura Kyonka as Anne Sullivan; Frank Gibson as Captain Keller; Nava Khorram as Kate Keller; Linda Wingenbach as Aunt Ev; Christian Cruz as James Keller; Wincel Bubos as Viney; and Xuchong Liang as Percy.

The show, originally scheduled to be shown in time for Christmas, was moved to a later date giving the cast and crew more time to prepare the costumes and sets, among others, according to director Harold Easton.

"It will be a wonderful job. It's going to be a great performance," Easton told *Saipan Tribune* amid the group's preparations on Sunday.

Easton said the costume designs will come from last year's Thespian competitions under the charge of Saipan Southern High School's Jane Mack and MHS' Wesley Foster. Execution of the actual designs will be handled by the Dolphin Theatre's in-house costume department.

Costume mistress Clariza Magat, an MHS junior, said there are about 10 different costumes, three of which have to be handmade as they are not available in the theatre's wide selection of costumes. "It's pretty hard to work on the details as they are from the old times, like old-fashioned, Southern clothing."

Technical director Kristine Valencia, also a junior at MHS, said constructing a set that would "fit the whole scenario of the play" was also tough. Valencia, 16, said her crew had to use old sets to come up with the needed three sets for the play.

Easton noted that the biggest challenge would be getting the main actors into their roles, particularly Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan.

"Everything is physical between the two because she can't speak. Helen's got to behave as if she can't see and can't hear, which makes it difficult. It's a very, very physical show between the Anne character and the Helen character," said Easton.

FOA president Susan Fishman-Tudor has been tasked to handle the two characters.

To prepare the actors for their roles, Fishman-Tudor wanted them to know everything about the characters, notably the "elemental things" that make them who they are. "My favorite kind of thing is to ask people to develop the character even before they are on stage."

Laura Kyonka, who plays the role of Sullivan, read Sullivan's diary entries and letters, watched different versions of the play, studied her and Sullivan's similarities and differences to help her identify and connect with the character.

"Annie has a lot of compassion for Helen. Helen's story breaks my heart. I have so much compassion for her," said Kyonka, a counselor at Kagman High School.

CLARISSA V. DAVID

The Marianas High School Dolphin Theatre technical crew work with the cast of *The Miracle Worker*, a three-act play based on the life of Helen Keller, which will be staged by the Friends of the Arts on Jan. 20 to 22.

Kyonka believes that the play would help the audience understand where people with disabilities come from. "To be able to see that happening in a young girl's life, I just think it's amazing and everybody should come see it."

"Helen Keller is an icon in the world of people with disabilities," Fishman-Tudor added. "The things that she ultimately said over her life are messages that we can all heed: 'It is not a tragedy that I cannot read. The tragedy is with those who can but don't.'"

Tickets for *The Miracle Worker* cost $12 for FOA members, $15 for adult non-members, $8 for children 5 to 11 years, and free for children 4 years and below. Call Frank Gibson at 287-7476 to buy tickets and for show schedule.

From left, Alana Chargualaf, George Washington High School, 12th Grade; Marrahia Muna, George Washington High School, 12th Grade; Kazzandra Ruaro, George Washington High School, 12th Grade; Jamaica Legaspi, George Washington High School, 12th Grade; William D. Leon Guerrero, Bank of Guam executive vice president/chief operating officer and vice chair of the board; Anthony Tornito, Okkodo High School, 12th Grade; and Kent Velasrubio, St. John's School, 9th Grade.
BANK OF GUAM

Five NMI students win bank's photo contest

Five students from the Commonwealth—four from Marianas High School on Saipan and one from the Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Jr/Sr High School on Rota, were named among the winners of the Bank of Guam's 2012 calendar photography contest.

In a statement issued yesterday, the bank said that Irvin C. Taimanao, a ninth-grader at Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Jr/Sr High School; Riya Nathrani, a twelfth-grader at Marianas High School; Cecily Manahane, also a twelfth-grader at MHS; Lou Gascon, a ninth-grader at MHS; and Gemma Noelani Somol, a tenth-grader at MHS, were among the winners of its 8th Annual Photo Contest.

The other winners are: Alana Chargualaf, George Washington High School, 12th Grade; Kent Velusrubio, St. John's School, 9th Grade; Marrahia Muna, George Washington High School, 12th Grade; Jamaica Legaspi, George Washington High School, 12th Grade; Anthony G. Tornito, Okkodo High School, 12th Grade; and Kazzandra L. Ruaro, George Washington High School, 12th Grade.

Cash prizes of $175 were awarded for each photo. The winning photos are now on display at the Bank of Guam's website: www.bankofguam.com. ***(BOG)***

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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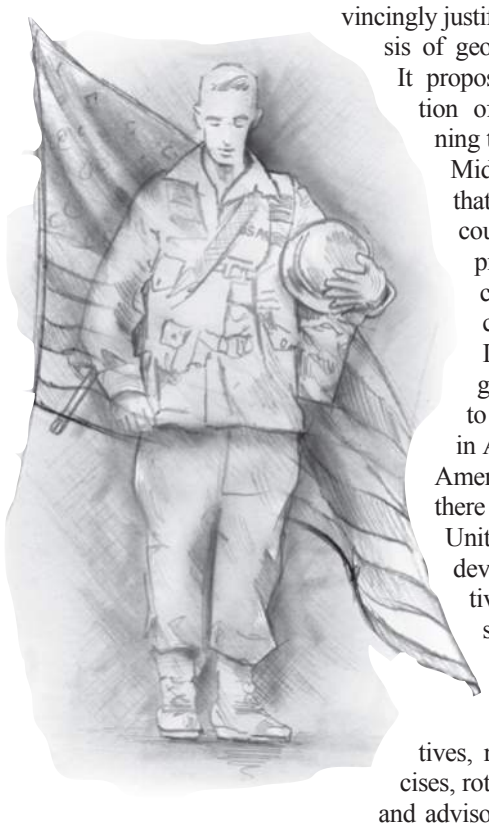
EDITORIAL

America's new lean fighting machine

Budgetary necessity may have been the mother of President Obama's reinvention of military strategy, but that doesn't mean the change is reckless or even imprudent. After the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq and with the winding down of the American presence in Afghanistan, it's time for new thinking.

In an appearance Thursday at the Pentagon, Obama unveiled the recommendations of a Defense Department study group that he said would produce a military that is "agile, flexible and ready for the full range of contingencies and threats." That would be accomplished by smaller increases in defense spending, a policy telegraphed by Obama's 10-year budget projections for fiscal 2012, which were $105 billion less than his 2011 blueprint.

Although the need for greater austerity forms the background for the new directions proposed in the report, they are convincingly justified by its analysis of geopolitical trends.



It proposes a reorientation of defense planning to China and the Middle East, noting that most European countries "are now producers of security rather than consumers of it." It also foresees greater attention to security threats in Africa and Latin America, though there as elsewhere the United States will develop "innovative, low-cost and small-footprint approaches to achieve our security objectives, relying on exercises, rotational presence and advisory capabilities."

Finally, the report contemplates, in cautious terms, a reduction in spending on nuclear weapons, saying it's possible that "our deterrence goals can be achieved with a smaller nuclear force, which would reduce the number of nuclear weapons in our inventory as well as their role in U.S. national security strategy."

The critical response to the report has focused on whether it effectively renounces the strategy that requires the United States to be sufficiently prepared to wage two ground wars simultaneously. It does not endorse such a change of policy. In fact, it declares: "Even when U.S. forces are committed to a large-scale operation in one region, they will be capable of denying the objectives of—or imposing unacceptable costs on—an opportunistic aggressor in a second region."

Nevertheless, there is a discernible change in emphasis. The report grounds preparedness to fight two wars in the concept of "reversibility"—defined as the ability to "make a course change

See AMERICA'S on Next Page

Is the tea party over?

By DOYLE MCMANUS
Los Angeles Times

Doyle McManus is a columnist for The Los Angeles Times*. Readers may send him e-mail at doyle.mcmanus@latimes.com.*

A year ago, the tea party movement looked like an irresistible wave sweeping through the Republican Party. Anyone who hoped to win this year's GOP presidential nomination, it seemed, would need to embrace tea party activists' stringent demands for smaller government, lower taxes and deep cuts in spending.

But in Tuesday's Iowa caucuses, the three candidates who hewed closest to the tea party line—Michele Bachmann, Rick Perry and Newt Gingrich—sank straight to the bottom of the pack. Instead of choosing a rigorous fiscal conservative such as Bachmann, Perry or Gingrich, Iowa Republicans divided most of their votes between Mitt Romney, the tea party's least favorite candidate, and Rick Santorum, a social conservative who voted for big spending and defended congressional earmarks when he was in the Senate. Ron Paul, at third place, was the most successful of the tea party-friendly candidates, but the acerbic libertarian's claim to 22 percent of Tuesday's caucus votes could well turn out to be his high-water mark for the year.

In national polls too the tea party's allure has been fading. A study in November by the Pew Research Center found that 27 percent of the public said they disagreed with the tea party, while only 20 percent said they agreed—a striking reversal from a year earlier, when 27 percent agreed. The poll's authors said it appeared that voters increasingly blamed the tea party and its champions in Congress for the gridlock in negotiations over the federal budget.

So does this mean the tea party over? Not exactly.

The tea party has changed the political landscape in ways that are likely to last for a while. Every Republican candidate, for example, at least claims now to be a fiscal conservative. Even Romney, whose greatest achievement as a governor was mandatory health insurance, now says he supports a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution that would cap spending at 20 percent of gross domestic product, a deep cut below the current 24 percent. Santorum goes even further, proposing a spending cap of 18 percent.

And it's not really the tea party's fault that its favorite candidates, Bachmann and Perry, stumbled. Bachmann, who founded the Tea Party Caucus in the House, never found a way to turn that into a qualification to be president. Perry, whose resume was strong on paper, proved so inept in televised debates that he couldn't remember which Cabinet agencies he wanted to abolish.

According to the "entrance poll" sponsored by news organizations, about a third of those who voted in the GOP caucus pronounced themselves "strong supporters" of the tea party; of those, 30 percent said they voted for Santorum, 17 percent for Gingrich and 16 percent for Paul.

Romney tied with Perry for fourth place among strong tea party adherents. In fact, it was Romney's first-place showing among non-tea partyers that made him the statewide winner—by just eight votes.

That divide mirrors the fragmentation of the tea party itself. It's always included a mix of libertarians (Paul voters), social conservatives (Santorum voters) and older Reagan conservatives (many of whom were Gingrich voters).

That's the biggest reason, when real votes were being counted, that Romney came out on top of the Republican field: His opponents split the remaining votes so many ways.

It's noteworthy too that although nearly half of the GOP caucusgoers labeled themselves "very conservative," only about a third were willing to call themselves "strong supporters" of the tea party.

As the campaign moves to New Hampshire and South Carolina, that persistent division may be Romney's biggest advantage. In many states, a majority of GOP voters still yearns for a candidate who isn't named Romney. But if they can't settle on a single alternative, Romney is likely to win the nomination the same way he won (or at least squeaked by) in Iowa.

At this point, Santorum appears to stand the best chance of uniting the not-Romney camp, if only because of his strong showing in Iowa, which will give him a significant bump. But the former Pennsylvania senator hasn't raised as much money as his rivals, hasn't built an organization big enough to manage a multi-state campaign and—perhaps most important—hasn't weathered the level of national scrutiny that brought down Gingrich, Bachmann and Perry.

And even before Iowa, some conservative activists complained that Santorum wasn't ideologically reliable. As a senator, they noted, he supported dozens of earmarks and voted for the expensive Medicare prescription drug entitlement (a mortal sin in tea party eyes) in 2003. "Rick Santorum was part of the problem in Washington," wrote Erick Erickson, author of the RedState blog. "The voters in Pennsylvania rejected him in 2006 because of his and the Republicans' profligate ways."

So in an election year that might have cemented tea party dominance of the GOP, the top two candidates come from other wings of the party: Santorum, a quintessential social conservative, and Romney, a quintessential establishment man.

And the most likely nominee is still the candidate many tea partyers like the least: Romney.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Bully in Gaia's yard

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime R. Vergara (jrvergarajr2031@aol.com) is a former PSS teacher and is currently writing from the campus of Shenyang Aerospace University in China.

In our New Year's scribble, we said, "save us from uncles, we pray." A close colleague immediately observed that we meant Uncle Ben, but though we may indeed need to be saved from his inchoate policies, we will have to wait a few more years until the next gubernatorial election. He is still my guv!

It must be Uncle Sam! Even for its half-menacing I-want-You poster, its cultivated image is that of the defender of freedom and the ardent advocate of justice and human rights around the world. That was the case when I learned English through VOA, and was introduced to American culture through USIS.

Migrating to a United States in the middle of its civil rights movement and its Vietnam War, the reality was different. Uncle Sam half-heartedly heeded the wisdom of its judicial branch on racial issues. It wasted the blood of its youth against the ideology of a distant land, this at a time when resources to fight poverty was thin. This immigrant was conflicted like an orphan beholden to a secretly abusive but glamorous Uncle.

Going to school in Texas, we realized that the image of the generously funded cowboy wildcat oil driller supplanted the genteel industry of the southern plantation gentlemen in the American dream. Uncle Sam's self-assumed guardianship of the world and its oil resources, with its WWII-Korea-Vietnam experience that war is profitable for business, fuels the flames of Gaia guardianship through domination. We are lucid that dear Uncle, self-consciously and intentionally, is a bully!

Why is this of any concern to us? One, we have been told often enough that we are a one-source government economy where productivity is a zero sum reality. In fact, we keep deluding ourselves into thinking that by letting investing messiahs build casinos in the Commonwealth, we would be self-reliant; we do not heed Tony Pellegrino's advice to roll up our sleeves and start fructifying the verdant terrain and the ocean shallows.

Second, we are not as a tourist destination an independent entity. Attracting Chinese travelers during the Lunar New Year holidays where it vied in notices with Fiji did not make the grade even with the CNMI-only visa in place. Singapura and Aomen (Macau), with their casinos, failed to make the grade either. The gambling Chinese will not visit a site solely for that reason. Malaysia and the Maldives were preferred destinations (not counting cross-Strait traffic between Fujian-Taiwan), along with exotic locations in Southeast Asia. Chinese, Korean, and Japanese people do not travel to parade their wealth; they travel to meet interesting people who do not gouge their wallets.

Third, contrary to the recent quip that something insignificant is characterized as "like Guam, pleasant but without power," the Marianas in fact has tremendous power to repel! We hold Uncle Sam's military defense lines, and in a world that looks at Uncle Sam as a bully, we are not about to see peace-loving family oriented tourists on our shores.

And why are we seen as a bully? Libya gave up its nuclear program on the promise that its governance of oil resources and finances was going to be protected. That panned out to be false from the point of view of those outside the good graces of the Pentagon, which sees Uncle Sam's fingerprints all over Tripoli, including Gaddafi's assassination; the DPRK is grateful that Kim Jung Il insisted on spending its assets on nuclear armaments instead of relying on China and Russia's promises to protect its interest from U.S., SoKor and Japan's continuing efforts to destabilize its internal structures.

The end of U.S. military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan has massed forces in Kuwait, Jordan, and Israel, with speculations that action versus Iran and Syria (and with its growing anti-U.S. sentiments, Saudi Arabia) are forthcoming. Massive embassy personnel usually associated with listening posts like Manila and Cairo now applies to the new Baghdad station, with some 1,900 former military personnel newly added to its employ.

Sanctioned and threatened Iran, whose shoreline is the length of the Persian and Oman Gulfs with the tight bend at the Strait of Hormuz on the UAE promontory, asked the U.S. 5th Fleet to keep its distance while it conducted naval exercises. The John C. Stennis carrier strike force quietly demurred but stayed close, and while in the Arabian Sea, it rescued 13 Iranian fisherman overwhelmed by 15 Somali pirates 170 miles southeast of Muscat, Oman. Iran expressed gratitude for the humanitarian act.

Accounts do not explain how and why Iranian fishermen and Somali pirates were so far out of their regular areas of operation, but for now, this was a great opportunity for the jolly green giant, Ho! Ho! Ho! to demonstrate that it was not a bully who willy-nilly bomb countries out of existence. No such luck. Instead, Defense and State gushed and gloated with glee, with no less than Penetta and the Carrier Admiral in the news. It was, however, silent over whether the maritime traffic it was protecting was at all disturbed!

The bully in Gaia's land and sea is not friendly, and the way it devours revenues, t'aint my friend! I feel it has exceeded its mandate, but I will defend its right to learn from its mistake! He is, after all, my Uncle!

Letters to the Editor

Sorenson Guam, be fair to the CNMI

It was already frustrating for me watching TV over the holidays and the straw that broke the camel's back was to see the ABC network being delayed *two weeks* before broadcasting certain shows and sports events in the CNMI but that was not the case in Guam. FYI Sorenson, most viewers in the CNMI associate Channel 7 with MCV that truly lives up to their slogan of being "unbeatable" when it comes to sports. But since Sorenson has taken over the broadcasting of ABC, which is being broadcasted from Power 99, Sorenson has taken full advantage of the ability to lower cost by degrading the quality of services being delivered to the CNMI. What is even more confusing is Sorenson broadcasts on Monday a one-week-and-a-day delay of some sports and two weeks on other programming—it's ridiculous in this age of technology. Sorenson needs to know that your customers deserve better even if there is very little we can do about it due to the existing networking contracts. But I will be seeking the assistance of the FCC if nothing is done to correct this unfair treatment of viewers on the same network.

I think it is truly horrific that Sorenson is broadcasting things two weeks old and having two days of college sports in the CNMI—yes we are forced to watch college sports on Saturday and Sunday in the CNMI and we get the Sunday replay of sports on Mondays when everyone is at work! These are replays that could certainly be shown on Sunday a week later. I am a real pro-sports fan, which is a large portion of the viewers of channel 7 in the CNMI. I'm sure that I can speak for many of the other sports fans when I say we do not want to see two-week-old games, especially on a Monday! I'm sure many of your viewers would like to see some signs of normality in the broadcasting of professional sports on Sunday, even if it is a week delayed as it really isn't Sunday for many of us sports fans if there are no pro-sports on TV!

We are also missing many live sports in the CNMI that are being shown in Guam, which is obviously not fair and maybe even wrong given it is the same network channel; I just wonder if this is an FCC violation. But just to share a good example: the CNMI did not get the great Georgia/Michigan State game live because only ABC had the rights, which made MCV helpless to broadcast this game, so why was it broadcasted in Guam and not in the CNMI? If the people in the CNMI are not doing the job then Sorenson should get someone who can—give me a call if you need someone in the CNMI to get the job done right. But if Sorenson is shaving the quality of services to the CNMI to save on cost it is not fair to your viewers that live in the same geographic region receiving the same broadcast. The CNMI should be receiving the same quality of services in the same time frame as Guam.

I was really surprised to learn that it was Sorenson behind this mess because I know they can do better than offer two-week-old broadcasting. I wonder what will their rival networks on the mainland say and do about this kind of broadcasting to U. S. viewers if they get a hold of this story? I had to write this letter, especially for the real sports fans, because someone needed to present this case in the court of public opinion, given the conditions. I truly believe the viewers in the CNMI are literally being *screwed* to a large degree and it really needs to be corrected. So please be fair to the CNMI and make the programming equal to Guam on the Sorenson network.

Ambrose M. Bennett
Kagman III, Saipan

Thank you

Last month I had some stomach pain and went to THC. The doctor was there and requested for a urinalysis. The nurses said I had kidney stones and the doc said to put me on an IV and prescribed pain medication. They then told me to drink a lot of water. I went home and did exactly that. The next day I felt a little better, until later that night I had a fever. I then took the last pain medication and went to sleep. Early the next morning I had pain everywhere and I could barely walk. I asked my husband to take me to the hospital.

The nurses asked me to pee in the cup again and then as I stood up I told my husband that I was going to pass out. Luckily my husband was there to catch me and carried me to the bed and screamed for the nurses and asked if they had called the doctor. Arley Long came in and ordered an ultrasound. The technician said that there was fluid. The helicopter came and it was meant for someone else but because my blood pressure kept dropping, Arley sent me first. When we reached CHC, I went into surgery right away. Turns out that it was not kidney stones; my spleen had ruptured. Dr. Young said I was very lucky. He said two more hours and there would have been nothing they could do. A couple of months ago, I fell on my son's bike and landed where my ribs are. There was a bruise, but I thought nothing of it because it went away. Little by little it got infected until it ruptured.

I would like to thank the following people who have helped us in our time of need: The Mayor's Office, The Care Club, Sen. Francisco Q. Cruz, Uncle Rem Diaz, Auntie Deb, my sister-in-laws Elaine and Marie, Boy and Marian for watching and taking care of my children, my stepmom Jess and my family, my co-workers, and for all the people who had me in their thoughts and prayers, and most especially for my husband. Without him it would have been impossible to get through this whole thing. And to Dr. Young, if it wasn't for you I would not be here. Thank you all very much I will be forever grateful.

Angela Reyes
San Jose, Tinian

Nothing on cost-cutting

The *Tribune*'s January 7-8 issue headlined that only one of 40 laws passed during calendar year 2011 was revenue-generating. More significant, however, is the fact that none of the laws passed during that time were cost-cutting.

Legislators apparently have not yet come to understand that imposing more fees, charges, taxes on an already stressed populace is not the answer, that the way out of budget shortfalls and deficits lies in cutting down on or cutting out things that involve layouts of cash.

Until they do understand that, and take action accordingly, the economy is not going to improve, regardless of how many laws they pass.

Ruth L. Tighe
Tanapag, Saipan

AMERICA'S

From Page 10

that could be driven by many factors, including shocks or evolutions in the strategic, operational, economic and technological spheres." The concept needs fleshing out, but if nimbleness in mobilization can be substituted for standing numbers of troops, that would be a military as well as a budgetary advantage, and both would help make the nation more secure.

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Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲85° ▼76°	▲85° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°

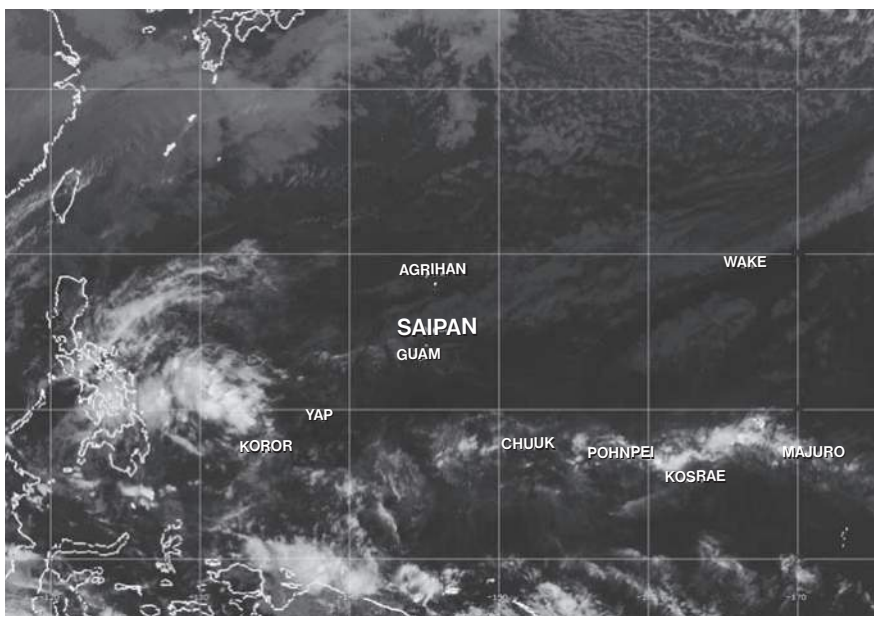
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	▲83	▼77
Palau	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼78
Yap	Mostly Sunny	▲87	▼79
Chuuk	Showers	▲86	▼79
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼79
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼79
Majuro	Showers	▲85	▼79

Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲70	▼65
Beijing	Sunny	▲38	▼13
Hong Kong	Mostly Cloudy	▲70	▼62
Honolulu	Sunny	▲82	▼69
London	Mostly Cloudy	▲52	▼45
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲73	▼45
Manila	Mostly Cloudy	▲84	▼79
Melbourne	Showers	▲71	▼59
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲78	▼63
New York	Partly Cloudy	▲43	▼34
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	▲50	▼40
Paris	Cloudy	▲50	▼42
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲46	▼29
Rome	Mostly Sunny	▲58	▼38
Salem	Showers	▲48	▼37
San Francisco	Sunny	▲65	▼45
Seoul	Sunny	▲33	▼19
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	▲49	▼37
Washington, DC	Showers	▲47	▼37

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, MONDAY, JANUARY 9, 2012
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front curves west-southwestward from 25N178E to northeast of Wake Island at 21N170E then continues as a shear line across the CNMI near Saipan to end near 12N138E. Cloudiness and scattered showers are found along and up to 150 miles north of this boundary. Trade-wind convergence is generating scattered showers and a few thunderstorms northwest of Koror or west of a line from 14N135E to 8N135E. Convergent trade winds are producing scattered showers over Pohnpei, Kwajalein and west of Majuro within 200 miles of a line from 7N156E to 7N170E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

2:19 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.4 Feet
9:48 AM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
2:45 PM	Today	Low Tide:	1.1 Feet
7:39 PM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:46 AM	6:03 PM
Wednesday	6:46 AM	6:03 PM
Thursday	6:46 AM	6:04 PM
Friday	6:46 AM	6:04 PM
Saturday	6:46 AM	6:05 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	6:58 PM	7:10 AM
Wednesday	7:53 PM	7:56 AM
Thursday	8:49 PM	8:40 AM
Friday	9:44 PM	9:24 AM
Saturday	10:39 PM	10:06 AM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 6, 2011

DEPARTURES

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)			
C05062	2:10am	2:40am	1, 5
SAIPAN (SPN)-ROTA (ROP)			
C05064	4:15am	4:50am	1, 5
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)			
C05070	4:15am	5:45am	1, 5 via ROP
C05070	4:35am	5:25am	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
C05068	8:25am	9:15am	Daily
C05074	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C05076	3:10pm	4:00pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05078	6:50pm	7:40pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05078	7:00pm	7:50pm	3, 6
C05072	9:55pm	10:45pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05072	10:05pm	10:55pm	3, 6
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)			
DL287	6:00am	8:35am	Daily
DL297	4:35pm	7:20pm	Daily
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)			
OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ604	3:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)			
OZ608	3:35am	7:05am	4, 7
SAIPAN-GUANZHOU (CAN)			
3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)			
3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)			
OZ606/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
C05070/191	4:35am	9:45am	3, 6 via GUM
DL287/173	6:00am	10:25pm	Daily via NRT
C05068/183	8:25am	9:25pm	2, 5 via GUM
C05068/183	8:25am	9:40pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
C05076/183	3:10pm	9:25pm	2, 5 via GUM
C05076/183	3:10pm	9:40pm	1, 4, 7 via GUM
C05076/193	3:10pm	11:00pm	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:00pm	Daily via ICN
C05072/PR111	9:55pm	7:50am+1	1, 5, 7 via GUM
C05072/PR111	10:05pm	7:50am+1	3, 6 via GUM
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)			
OZ606/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ606/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
C05076/179	3:10pm	10:25pm	1, 5 via GUM
OZ604/723	3:20pm	10:30pm	Daily via ICN
OZ604/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)			
C05064	5:15am	5:45am	1, 5
ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN (SPN)			
C05062	3:10am	3:45am	1, 5
GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
C05062	2:10am	3:45am	1, 5 via ROP
C05069	2:45am	3:35am	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
C05071	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
C05073	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05075	1:40pm	2:30pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C05077	5:30pm	6:20pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05077	5:40pm	6:30pm	3, 6
C05079	8:35pm	9:25pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05079	8:45pm	9:35pm	3, 6
NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL288	8:40pm	1:15am+1	Daily
SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ605	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
OZ607	9:00pm	2:20am+1	3, 6
GUANZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN			
3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5
SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
DL172/288	8:00am	1:15am+1	Daily via NRT
C0190/5077	10:55am	6:30pm	3, 6 via GUM
C0190/5079	10:55am	9:35pm	3, 6 via GUM
OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/C05071	10:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 5, 7 via GUM
C0192/5071	10:25pm	7:50am+1	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
C0184/5071	11:10pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
C0184/5071	11:59pm	7:50am+1	2, 5 via GUM
HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
OZ724/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ750/603	1:10am	2:20pm	1, 2, 4, 6 via ICN
OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
C0180/5071	11:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 5 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 5K: FlyGuam; 3U: Sichuan Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CO: Continental; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana

ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam–Rota			
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily
Rota–Saipan			
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily
Guam–Rota			
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily
Rota–Saipan	17:50	18:20	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily
Rota–Guam	10:20	10:45	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily
Rota–Guam			
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily
Saipan–Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Tinian–Saipan			
FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily

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- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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Business

Analysts: Gadget sales to top $1 trillion in 2012

By PETER SVENSSON
AP TECHNOLOGY WRITER

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Developing countries like China and India will drive global sales of consumer electronics above $1 trillion this year for the first time, even as cash-strapped shoppers in the U.S. and Western Europe ease off spending for high-tech gear, industry analysts said Sunday.

Developing countries will account for 46 percent of global gadget sales in 2012, up from 37 percent four years ago, according to GfK Boutique Research and the Consumer Electronics Association.

The groups presented their forecast ahead of the massive International Consumer Electronics Show, which kicks off Tuesday in Las Vegas.

Their estimate of 2012 global electronics sales, at $1.038 trillion, represents growth of 5 percent from last year. That compares to growth of 8 percent from 2010 to 2011.

Consumers in China and other developing Asian countries, Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe are snapping up high-tech goods as they climb toward a middle-class lifestyle. Meanwhile, gadget sales in the U.S., Japan and Western Europe are stagnant, unable to command a higher share of consumer spending.

Separately, NPD Group said Sunday that U.S. sales of consumer electronics fell 5.9 percent this past holiday season, as smartphones cannibalize sales of standalone gadgets like cameras, camcorders and GPS navigation devices.

The firm, which tracks retail sales, said electronics sales excluding phones totaled $9.5 billion in the five weeks ending Dec. 24.

AP

Workers build the Sony booth prior to the Consumer Electronics Show on Sunday, Jan. 8, 2012, in Las Vegas. The annual show exhibiting the newest in tech gadgets opens Jan. 10.

Camcorder sales plunged 43 percent, and sales of digital picture frames fell 38 percent. GPS units slumped 33 percent. PC and TV sales slipped just 4 percent, bolstered by sales of TVs bigger than 50 inches.

Best Buy Co., the largest U.S. electronics retailer, said Friday that December sales lagged because of weak traffic. Sales at stores open a year fell 1.2 percent for the month. However, sales were strong for smartphones, tablet computers and e-readers.

The CEA and GfK expect smartphones and tablets to be the hot products globally as well, to the exclusion of other devices.

"We'll see most product categories slowing down or going into contraction," said Steve Bambridge, research director at U.K.-based GfK. Smartphones and tablets are "sucking up consumer spending" he said.

Poll: Americans spent $76 a day in December

By TIFFANY HSU
LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES—Americans' daily spending rose slightly to $76 in December in the highest monthly average of last year, though analysts suspect that consumers offset holiday purchases by cutting back on routine costs, according to a Gallup poll.

Consumers spent more during the holiday month than they did in November, when they shelled out $71 a day, according to the survey. But it's not much of a change compared with December 2010, when daily costs ran about $75.

And Gallup experts believe that last month's spending boost came at the expense of normal spending on groceries, gas, clothing and dining out. Retailers reported holiday sales that were up 3.3 percent compared with 2010.

The year-long average for daily spending last year was $67, up a few dollars from 2010 and 2009 but still far below the $96 daily amount recorded for 2008.

The slide is consistent regardless of income. Consumers making more than $90,000 a year spent $121 a day in 2011, down 17 percent from their $146-a-day stipend in 2008. For Americans with less than $24,000 in income, it's a steeper slide—down 38 percent to $41 a day from $66.

Chavez: Venezuela won't recognize arbitration body

By IAN JAMES
ASSOCIATED PRESS

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said Sunday that his government should pull out of a World Bank-affiliated arbitration body and won't recognize its decisions.

Exxon Mobil Corp. is one of more than a dozen companies with arbitration cases against Venezuela pending before the Washington-based International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes, or ICSID.

Chavez announced his decision while referring to a more than $900 million award that Exxon Mobil recently won in another arbitration case before the International Chamber of Commerce.

"Now they're threatening us in the ICSID," Chavez said on his Sunday television program. "We have to get out of that ICSID. And I'll go ahead and say it: We won't recognize any of ICSID's decisions."

Analysts said that if Chavez follows through on the plan, it could hurt Venezuela's ability to obtain credit internationally and attract oil investments. It also might prompt companies in disputes with Chavez's government to try to freeze the country's assets, including refineries it owns in the U.S.

However, pulling out of the arbitration body would take time, and analysts said Chavez's government still has legal obligations that it can't escape in the pending cases before the arbitration body.

Exxon Mobil sought arbitration after Chavez's government nationalized an oil project in Venezuela in 2007. The Irving, Texas-based oil company declined to comment about Chavez's remarks.

The ICSID's website lists 17 pending cases against Venezuela. They include claims by Houston-based oil company ConocoPhillips Co., U.S. glass container manufacturer Owens-Illinois Inc. and Toronto-based mining company Crystallex International Corp.

The Caracas-based consulting firm Ecoanalitica estimated recently that the bulk of the government's nationalizations have involved more than $33.7 billion in assets, including about $23 billion in outstanding obligations. It estimates that of that, Exxon Mobil and ConocoPhillips stand to gain a total of $11.5 billion in their pending arbitration claims.

High school resume can win a great deal

PERSONAL FINANCE

By GAIL MARKSJARVIS
Chicago Tribune

Gail MarksJarvis is a personal finance columnist for the Chicago Tribune *and author of* Saving for Retirement Without Living Like a Pauper or Winning the Lottery. *Readers may send her email at gmarksjarvis@tribune.com.*

QUESTION: I have four children, and the oldest is a senior and going to college next fall. I'm fearful that I make too much money (mid-$100s) and I don't have much saved, so borrowing, grants and scholarships seem to be my best option. My daughter scored 25 on the ACT and is well-rounded—plays sports, has a job, is a church member and volunteers. Any suggestions of books or websites would be very much appreciated.—S.W.

ANSWER: Unfortunately, like many parents, the shock of paying for college is hitting you so late in the process that you have limited options. But if you act immediately, there's a chance you can make a difference. If it's too late for your daughter, you still have time for your three younger children. But if you are going to make a dent in the $400,000 you are likely to spend on your four children, you need to get to work now. Winning scholarships and grants takes hard work and strategy. You can't just fill out FAFSA forms and hope to be bestowed with money.

With your income, it's unlikely you will get any financial aid—other than the opportunity to borrow with federal Stafford loans—at a public college. But private colleges are a different matter, especially less popular colleges trying to fill vacancies or attract students with higher ACT and SAT scores. Private colleges use grants and scholarships, or what's called "merit aid," to lure students slightly above their normal students academically. If colleges can get high-scoring students, it lifts their rankings compared to other schools. That's a huge goal, because higher rankings make marketing easier.

So if aid is really important to you for your oldest daughter, tell her not to set her heart on any school. Put her to work now filling out applications for about a half-dozen private schools before deadlines come soon. You can't just slap the applications together. Get a book on writing college essays, so your daughter can sell her unique qualities to admissions' staff.

Ben Kaplan's book, "How to Go to College Almost for Free," provides the strategy for a winning scholarship application. It also can be applied to college admissions. The prime time to apply for college scholarships is early in your child's high school sophomore and junior years. And I suggest making a full-time summer job out of scholarship applications for talented high school students. Kaplan was able to pay for Harvard because he pursued scholarships strategically. He found that when he won one, it helped him win the next.

To find colleges where your daughter might be given a scholarship, look at the U.S. News & World Report College Rankings, paying particular attention to second-tier and third-tier colleges. Target those that provide scholarships and have average ACT scores below 25. If your child has a talent that the college needs to fill out its freshman class, she will be all the more attractive. She should contact the coach in her sport to see if he or she will be an advocate for a scholarship. If your daughter applies to a school in a distant state or where her religion, race or gender is somewhat unique, schools will be more interested in her than if she matches the typical student.

You can also look for outside scholarships at FastWeb.com, Scholarships.com and FinAid.org. But most deadlines have passed for high school seniors. If your daughter isn't interested in making the effort now, she could consider attending an affordable community college for two years and then transferring to a public university.

Beware of taking on too much debt yourself. Before financing some $400,000 in college costs, realize your retirement will arrive sooner than you may realize, and you will need about $1.5 million in savings if you plan to live on $100,000 a year. College students can get federal Stafford loans for college, but 70-year-olds can't get loans for groceries.

For your younger children, start looking for the most lucrative scholarships at finaid.org. Some are worth more than $25,000. But while it is possible for most students to win scholarships if they work at it, few are larger than $5,000. Many are only about $1,000. So saving more for your younger children is a better strategy than counting only on scholarships.

If you save money in a 529 college savings plan through your state, your savings will grow without being taxed. Also, make sure you apply for financial aid when each child goes to college. Although your oldest won't qualify based on your income, if you have children in college at the same time, you might be eligible at private colleges.

Nation

Rep. Giffords leads crowd in Pledge of Allegiance

By AMANDA LEE MYERS
ASSOCIATED PRESS

AP

Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, left, leads the Pledge of Allegiance accompanied by her husband, former astronaut Mark Kelly, at the start of a memorial vigil remembering the victims and survivors of the shooting that wounded Giffords, 12 others and killed six one year ago Sunday, Jan. 8, 2012, in Tucson, Ariz.

TUCSON, Ariz. (AP)—Rep. Gabrielle Giffords led a crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance, her words ringing out across a cold Tucson night in a rare public appearance Sunday evening at a candlelight vigil one year after surviving a deadly shooting.

The Democratic congresswoman—who has struggled to re-learn to walk after being shot in the head—stepped onstage to cheers from the crowd. Ron Barber, a staffer who was wounded in the rampage that killed six one year ago, invited her to lead the audience in the pledge.

The crowd chanted: "Gabby, Gabby."

She limped to the podium, and husband Mark Kelly helped lift her left hand over her heart. After months of intensive speech therapy, Giffords recited the pledge with the audience, head held high and a smile on her face as she punched each word.

The remembrance at the University of Arizona concluded a day of events, including a church service that drew hundreds in the afternoon and a citywide bell-ringing at 10:11 a.m., the exact time a gunman started shooting at a Safeway political event on Jan. 8, 2011.

With hugs and tears, southern Arizonans remembered the dead, the shattered lives and those who acted heroically after a gunman opened fire at an outdoor meet-and-greet that severely wounded Giffords and 12 others.

"Those of us who survived were forever changed by that moment," Kelly said. "For the past year, we've had new realities to live with, the reality and pain of letting go of the past.

"There's a reality that life is unpredictable, and that even in the best of times, our cherished friends, the good, the caring, the innocent among us, the closest and dearest people we know, can be taken from us," he said.

Earlier in the day, a crowd of people at St. Augustine Cathedral recited the 23rd Psalm and watched as relatives of the six dead walked solemnly down the aisle with a single red rose, placing the flowers in a vase in front of a picture of a heart.

"Even in the midst of this troubling year, the healing, the courage that we have experienced in our community—each one of us can notice how our cups overflow with the blessings of our lives," said Stephanie Aaron, Giffords' rabbi.

Hundreds of people at the cathedral—including Gov. Jan Brewer—stood and chanted, "We remember, we remember, we remember with grateful hearts." Some closed their eyes while others held each other.

At the evening service, 19 candles marked the lost and the survivors. Giffords and Kelly lit one candle together as an orchestra played and many in the crowd wept. The emotional service brought together many who survived the shooting, and those who lost loved ones.

Suzi Hileman, who was shot three times, took the stage, hugged Giffords and walked to the candle area. She lit one, put her hands over her heart and mouthed "thank you" to the crowd.

Giffords, 41, has spent the last year in Houston undergoing intensive physical and speech therapy in a recovery that doctors and family have called miraculous. She is able to walk and talk, vote in Congress and gave a televised interview to ABC's Diane Sawyer in May.

But doctors have said it would take many months to determine the lasting effects of her brain injury. The three-term congresswoman has four months to decide whether to seek re-election.

Barber said he spent time with Giffords on Friday and Saturday.

"Even though it's a hard weekend for her and all of us, she wanted to be here with her community to remember," he said. "She's sad, we're all sad, and she's glad to be home."

Jared Lee Loughner has pleaded not guilty to 49 charges in the shooting. The 23-year-old, who has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder, is being forcibly medicated at a Missouri prison facility in an effort to make him mentally ready for trial.

President Barack Obama called Giffords on Sunday to offer his support and tell her he and the first lady are keeping her, the families of those killed and the whole Tucson community in their thoughts and prayers, according to the White House. He said Giffords was an inspiration to all Americans.

GOP rivals target Romney 2 days before NH primary

By STEVE PEOPLES
ASSOCIATED PRESS

CONCORD, N.H. (AP)—Mitt Romney's Republican presidential rivals piled on the criticism Sunday, two days before New Hampshire's primary, with a combative Newt Gingrich leading the aggression by accusing the GOP front-runner of "pious baloney" and charging him with hiding behind inaccurate attack ads aired by allies.

Romney

In the increasingly acerbic nomination fight, Romney fired back at Gingrich during a morning debate: "This ain't beanbag ... we're going to describe the differences between us." By evening, he also had taken shots from Rick Santorum, Jon Huntsman and Rick Perry.

With time running short to curtail Romney here and perhaps elsewhere, his opponents started the day assailing him on the debate stage and ended it by doing the same in appearances across New Hampshire and South Carolina as they worked to appeal to the chunk of Republican voters unenthused with the idea of the former Massachusetts governor as the party's nominee.

Santorum made a beeline to the conservative upstate of South Carolina to trumpet the endorsement of former Republican presidential candidate Gary Bauer.

"I've still got a little blood on my sleeve from Mitt Romney from that debate," the former Pennsylvania senator told 400 people crammed into Chief's sports bar in Greenville, S.C. "We're not going to shy away where there are differences." He also alluded to Romney's position switches on a series of issues, saying: "We've got a lot of candidates that just adapt to whatever the environment is .... I don't, because the truth doesn't change."

Looking to revive his flagging candidacy, Perry also swooped into the Southern state.

The Texas governor told roughly 300 people at a packed burger joint in Spartanburg, S.C., that his campaign, after a disappointing finish in the Iowa caucuses, was like the last stand at the Alamo. He also assailed Romney, casting him as an insider and arguing: "We've got to have somebody that is an outsider that is not interested in tinkering around the edges—but that will go into Washington, D.C., and overhaul that place."

Back in New Hampshire, Gingrich assailed Romney as a "Massachusetts moderate" and promoted a video being released by his allies that attacks Romney's business career. The Gingrich-leaning Winning Our Future PAC said Sunday that a 28-minute online video—which assails Romney for "reaping massive awards" while head of Bain Capital—may show up on TV in the coming weeks.

"To quote the governor, you have to have broad shoulders and you have to be able to take the heat to be in the kitchen," Gingrich said after an afternoon town-hall style appearance at Manchester restaurant.

Romney, the former Massachusetts governor, won the Iowa caucuses last Tuesday by a scant eight votes over Santorum but is so far ahead in New Hampshire polls that his rivals have virtually conceded he will win.

South Carolina comes next, on Jan. 21, the first Southern state to hold a primary. While it is the contest where Gingrich, Santorum and the rest of Romney's rivals face an urgent need to slow his candidacy, Romney pointedly noted that he has been endorsed by that state's governor, Nikki Haley.

Santorum finished second in Iowa, followed by Texas Rep. Ron Paul, with Gingrich fourth, Texas Gov. Rick Perry fifth and Minnesota Rep. Michele Bachmann in last place. She has since quit the race.

Huntsman, the former Utah governor, skipped Iowa in hopes of a breakout showing in New Hampshire.

Boston lawsuit claims DES-breast cancer link

By DENISE LAVOIE
AP LEGAL AFFAIRS WRITER

BOSTON (AP)—Arline MacCormack first heard about DES from her mother when she was 17. Three decades later, MacCormack believes that the drug her mother took to prevent miscarriages caused her to develop breast cancer at age 44.

MacCormack, of Newton, is one of 53 women from around the country who are suing drug companies who made and promoted DES for millions of pregnant women from about 1938 to the early 1970s. In 1971, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration told doctors to stop prescribing DES for their pregnant patients after a study found that taking DES during pregnancy appeared to increase the risk of developing a rare vaginal cancer years later for DES daughters in their teens and 20s.

MacCormack

DES, or diethylstilbestrol (dahy-eth-uhl-stil-bes'-trawl), is a synthetic estrogen that was prescribed to millions of women in the United States, Europe and other countries to prevent miscarriages, premature birth and other problems.

The case in Boston is being closely watched by DES daughters around the country. Thousands of lawsuits have been filed since the 1970s alleging links between DES and cervical and vaginal cancer, as well as infertility problems. Many of those cases were settled before trial. The Boston case is believed to be the first major litigation alleging a link between DES and breast cancer in DES daughters over the age of 40.

MacCormack, now 50, said she was stunned when she was diagnosed with breast cancer six years ago after having mammograms every six months since she turned 40 because she had had several benign cysts removed over the years.

"The characteristics of my cancer were for women over 60 typically. It wasn't the type of cancer a 40-year-old or a 44-year-old woman gets," said MacCormack.

"When I read the research that's been done, I found I had more chance of getting it because my mom took DES," she said.

The women's lawyers say their case is supported by a recent study that suggests that breast cancer risk is nearly doubled in DES daughters over the age of 40. The average woman has about a 1 in 50 chance of developing breast cancer by 55. The study, led by Dr. Robert Hoover, a researcher at the National Cancer Institute, found that the chance for DES daughters is 1 in 25.

The lawsuit alleges that 14 drug manufacturers—including Eli Lilly and Co. and Bristol-Myers Squibb Co.- withheld from doctors and the FDA reports that showed DES did not prevent miscarriages and raised serious questions about the safety of the drug.

"This drug, DES, was the biggest human experiment of quackery in the history of medicine," said Aaron Levine, a Washington, D.C., lawyer who filed the Boston lawsuit and represents another 18 DES daughters making similar claims.

Representatives and lawyers for Eli Lilly and Bristol-Myers Squibb declined to comment on the lawsuit.

In court and in public documents, the companies argue that a firm link between DES and breast cancer has not been established and that the DES daughters who are suing them have not shown that DES caused their cancers.

Asia

Malaysia opposition's Anwar freed of sodomy charge

By EILEEN NG and SEAN YOONG
ASSOCIATED PRESS

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Malaysia's High Court acquitted opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim of sodomizing a former aide, citing unreliable DNA evidence in a verdict Monday that surprised supporters who saw the case as an attempt to sideline him.

Anwar said the verdict left him free to focus on trying to topple Prime Minister Najib Razak's long-ruling coalition in national elections that many predict will be held within months. The opposition has long maintained that the government concocted the charge to damage Anwar's chances of leading his three-party alliance to an election victory. Najib denies plotting against Anwar.

Najib's administration said the judgment showed that Malaysia's legal system was free from government interference, despite claims to the contrary by opposition activists.

The case rested mainly on testimony by Anwar's 26-year-old accuser, Saiful Bukhari Azlan, and semen samples found on Saiful's body that investigators said matched Anwar's DNA.

High Court Judge Mohamad Zabidin Diah said his decision was founded on concerns that the DNA evidence was tainted.

"The court at this stage could not with 100 percent certainty exclude the possibility that the (DNA) sample is not compromised," Mohamad Zabidin told the court. "Therefore it is not safe to rely on the (DNA) sample. There is no evidence to corroborate" the charge.

A crowd of Anwar's supporters shouted "Allahu Akbar," or "God is great" after the judge finished reading

Anwar

the verdict. Anwar's wife and children burst into tears and hugged him.

"Thank God justice has prevailed," a jubilant Anwar told reporters. "I have been vindicated. To be honest, I am a little surprised."

However, questions lingered over whether the legal saga was over, as chief prosecutor Yusof Zainal Abiden said he had not decided whether to appeal the acquittal.

Police outside the court reported that after the verdict was delivered, three small blasts wounded two people on roads nearby. Officials indicated they were caused by homemade explosives, but did not say whether they were linked to the case.

Anwar, whom the opposition regards as its future prime minister if it wins federal power, had earlier said he was bracing for a conviction, which could result in a maximum of 20 years in prison.

Anwar is the opposition's most charismatic politician and is considered the figure who can best hold the three ideologically distinct parties in his alliance together.

Information Minister Rais Yatim said in a statement that the acquittal "proves that the government does not hold sway over judges' decisions."

"Malaysia has an independent judiciary," Rais said. "The current wave of bold democratic reforms introduced by (Najib) will help extend this transparency to all areas of Malaysian life."

Phil Robertson, deputy director of New York-based Human Rights Watch's Asian division, said Anwar should never have been charged in the first place, adding that the case had been "politically motivated and plagued with irregularities."

At least 5,000 opposition supporters gathered outside the court Monday, chanting "Long live the people." Some carried banners that read "Free Anwar" and "Reject slander."

A police helicopter flew over the court, while riot police backed by a truck mounted with a water cannon monitored the crowd amid concerns that a conviction might spark unrest in Malaysia's largest city.

Defense lawyers had insisted Saiful's testimony about the alleged sodomy at a Kuala Lumpur condominium in 2008 was riddled with inconsistencies and that the DNA evidence was mishandled by investigators.

ASIA BRIEFS

Gunman in Afghan uniform kills US soldier on base

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—The Afghan military says a man in an Afghan uniform opened fire on a group of Americans at a base in the south of the country, killing one U.S. soldier and wounding another. Spokesman Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi says the gunman was also killed in the shootout on Sunday. He said an investigation is trying to determine whether the gunman was a member of the Afghan military. A NATO statement late Sunday said only that a coalition service member had been killed in the incident, apparently by an Afghan soldier, but provided no further details on the victim's nationality. Azimi said the shooting occurred inside one of the Afghan National Army's bases in Zabul province, about 250 miles (400 kilometers) south of Kabul.

Attack on car near Freeport mine in Papua kills 2

TIMIKA, Indonesia (AP)—Two Indonesian workers were shot to death in an attack near Freeport-McMoRan's gold and copper mine. Freeport Indonesia spokesman Ramdani Sirait said the victims were employees of a contractor who were by car near the mining town of Tembagapura. Sirait says initial reports indicate that gunmen fired on the vehicle. Police were not immediately available for comment on Monday's attack. The mine in restive Papua province is run by a subsidiary of the Phoenix, Arizona-based Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Inc. It has been hit with arson, roadside attacks and blockades since operations began in the 1970s.

Solomons hit by 6.6 quake; no tsunami threat

SANTA CRUZ ISLAND, Solomon Islands (AP)—Santa Cruz Island in the South Pacific has rocked by a magnitude-6.6 earthquake, but there have been no reports of injuries and authorities say there is no threat of a tsunami. The United States Geological Survey reported that the temblor struck Monday afternoon about 219 miles (353 kilometers) east of the town of Kira Kira in the Solomon Islands. Santa Cruz and surrounding islands are remote and sparsely populated. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said in a statement there was no threat of a regional tsunami.

Little oil seen after ship splits in New Zealand

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—A light sheen of oil extended about two miles (three kilometers) from a wrecked cargo ship that split in two over the weekend, but so far the damage appears small compared to the environmental disaster created when the vessel ran aground in October, New Zealand authorities said Monday. About 150 cargo containers also spilled from the Rena, and officials were warning beachgoers to stay away from the debris that has washed ashore. Some people have been seen scavenging bags of powdered milk from the beach, but authorities warned the food may be unsafe. Bruce Fraser, a spokesman for Maritime New Zealand, which oversees shipping, said it estimates that fewer than 100 tons of oil remain on the wreck. The Rena spilled about 400 tons of fuel oil when it ran aground Oct. 5 on Astrolabe Reef, 14 miles (22 kilometers) from Tauranga Harbor on North Island.

Report: Body paraded after China self-immolation

BEIJING (AP)—The body of a Tibetan monk who died after setting himself on fire was paraded through the streets in northwestern China, a report said Monday, in the latest in a series of self-immolation protests against Chinese rule. U.S. broadcaster Radio Free Asia said hundreds of angry Tibetans forced police to hand over the remains of the 42-year-old monk, named Sopa, then carried them through the streets in Dari county in Qinghai province. It said the monk died Sunday morning after drinking and throwing kerosene over his body. Radio Free Asia quote a source as saying Sopa's "body exploded in pieces" before police took it away. Two other men set themselves on fire Friday in Sichuan province. At least 15 monks, nuns and former monks are now believed to have set themselves on fire in the past year. Most have chanted for Tibetan freedom and the return of their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, who fled to India amid an abortive uprising against Chinese rule in 1959.

AP

Barefoot Catholic devotees carry the wooden statue known as the Black Nazarene to its carriage for its annual procession following a mass at the Rizal Park Monday, Jan. 9, 2012 to celebrate its annual festival in Manila, Philippines.

Philippine Catholics gather despite terror warning

By JIM GOMEZ
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—More than 3 million Roman Catholic worshippers paraded with a charred Christ statue through the Philippine capital in an annual procession Monday despite a warning from the president that terrorists might target the gathering.

The black wooden statue known as the Black Nazarene was displayed at the seaside Rizal Park where Manila's Archbishop Luis Antonio Tagle led a Mass and offered prayers for victims of tropical storms and landslides over the past year.

Organizers then brought the statue—believed to have healing powers—down from the stage for its three-mile (five-kilometer) procession to a popular church as devotees rushed forward to touch it. Police estimated that more than 3 million people had joined the procession; up to 9 million were expected.

President Benigno Aquino III warned Sunday at a hastily called news conference, along with military and police officials, that several terrorists planned to disrupt the event and had reportedly been seen in the capital. But the threat was not high enough to cancel the procession and police were working hard to thwart any attack, he said.

"The sad reality of the world today is that terrorists want to disrupt the ability of people to live their lives in the ways they want to, including the freedom to worship," Aquino said in the nationally televised conference.

The government banned cell phones and firecrackers at the event. Around 15,000 policemen were deployed with sniffer dogs, while ambulances and hospitals were on standby, according to an entry in Aquino's Facebook page.

Australia urged its citizens to avoid the procession and nearby areas.

Interior Secretary Jesse Robredo said without elaborating that six to nine people from the southern Philippines may be involved in the plot, and officials gave no description of their group or its motives. When asked if the threat came from the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf group, Aquino said that possibility had not been confirmed.

Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin told reporters that raids had been conducted in several suspected terrorist safe houses Manila and nearby Rizal province but without any results so far.

The wooden statue of Christ, crowned with thorns and bearing a cross, is believed to have been brought from Mexico to Manila in 1606 by Spanish missionaries. The ship that carried it caught fire, but the charred statue survived and was named the Black Nazarene.

Some believe the statue's survival of fires and earthquakes through the centuries and intense bombings during World War II is a testament to its powers.

The Philippines is Asia's largest predominantly Roman Catholic nation.

World

Iran reported to enrich uranium at underground lab

By ALI AKBAR DAREINI and BRIAN MURPHY
ASSOCIATED PRESS

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Iran has begun uranium enrichment at a new underground site built to withstand possible airstrikes, a leading hard-line newspaper reported Sunday in another show of defiance against Western pressure to rein in Tehran's nuclear program.

The operations at the bunker-like facility south of Tehran, reported by the Kayhan daily newspaper, are small in comparison to Iran's main enrichment site. But the centrifuges at the underground labs are considered more efficient and are shielded from aerial surveillance and protected against airstrikes by up to 300 feet (90 meters) of mountain rock.

Uranium enrichment is at the core of the international standoff over Iran's nuclear program. The U.S. and its allies fear Iran could use its enrichment facilities to develop high-grade nuclear material for warheads.

Iran—which claims it only seeks nuclear reactors for energy and research—has sharply increased its threats and military posturing against stronger pressures, including U.S. sanctions targeting Iran's Central Bank in attempts to complicate its ability to sell oil.

A senior commander of the Revolutionary Guard force was quoted as saying Tehran's leadership has decided to order the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic oil route, if the country's petroleum exports are blocked. Revolutionary Guard ground forces also staged war games in eastern Iran in an apparent display of resolve against U.S. forces just over the border in Afghanistan.

Iranian officials have issued similar threats, but this is the strongest statement yet by a top commander in the security establishment.

AP

In this April 8, 2008 file photo provided by the Iranian President's Office, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, center, visits the Natanz Uranium Enrichment Facility some 200 miles (322 kilometers) south of the capital Tehran.

"The supreme authorities ... have insisted that if enemies block the export of our oil, we won't allow a drop of oil to pass through the Strait of Hormuz. This is the strategy of the Islamic Republic in countering such threats," Revolutionary Guard deputy commander Ali Ashraf Nouri was quoted as saying by another newspaper, the Khorasan daily.

The latest statements are certain to ramp up tensions with the U.S. and its allies, which are trying to increase pressure on Iran to punish it for its disputed nuclear program.

For the moment, however, U.S. officials are seeking stronger diplomatic and economic pressure on Iran rather than increasing threats of military action. A number of experts say Iran is unlikely to close the strait because that could hurt Iran as much as the West.

In an interview broadcast Sunday, U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said Iran is laying the groundwork for making nuclear weapons someday, but is not yet building a bomb. Panetta reiterated U.S. concerns about a unilateral strike by Israel against Iran's nuclear facilities, saying the action could trigger Iranian retaliation against U.S. forces in the region.

"We have common cause here" with Israel, he said. "And the better approach is for us to work together."

Panetta's remarks on CBS' "Face the Nation" reflect the Obama administration's long-held view that Iran is not yet committed to building a nuclear arsenal, only to create the industrial and scientific capacity to allow one if its leaders to decide to take that final step.

The Kayhan newspaper, which is close to Iran's ruling clerics, said Tehran has begun injecting uranium gas into sophisticated centrifuges at the Fordo facility near the holy city of Qom.

"Kayhan received reports yesterday that show Iran has begun uranium enrichment at the Fordo facility amid heightened foreign enemy threats," the newspaper said in a front-page report. Kayhan's manager is a representative of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has the final word on all important matters of state.

Iran's nuclear chief, Fereidoun Abbasi, said Saturday that his country will "soon" begin enrichment at Fordo. It was impossible to immediately reconcile the two reports.

Iran has a major uranium enrichment facility in Natanz in central Iran, where nearly 8,000 centrifuges are operating. Tehran began enrichment at Natanz in 2006.

Nouri said Iran's leadership has made a strategic decision to close the Strait of Hormuz should its exports be blocked. One-sixth of the world's oil flows to market through the strait, which is jointly controlled by Iran and Oman at the mouth of the Persian Gulf.

President Barack Obama approved new sanctions against Iran a week ago, targeting the central bank and its ability to sell petroleum abroad. The U.S. has delayed implementing the sanctions for at least six months, worried about sending the price of oil higher at a time when the global economy is struggling. But the new sanctions nevertheless prompted a series of threats from Iranian officials about closing the Strait of Hormuz.

The newspaper paraphrased Nouri as saying that a 10-day naval drill that ended Jan. 3 was preparation for such a closure. The Guard, which is Iran's most powerful military force and which has its own naval arm, has planned more sea maneuvers for February.

Khamenei "determined a new strategy for the armed forces, by which any threat from enemies will be responded to with threats," Nouri said.

S. Africa: Joy, sadness as Mandela's party turns 100

BLOEMFONTEIN, South Africa (AP)—Tens of thousands of chanting and dancing revelers waved the green and gold colors of the African National Congress as Africa's oldest liberation movement celebrated its 100th anniversary Sunday, though many South Africans say the party hasn't delivered on its promises since taking power in 1994.

A dozen African leaders and more former heads of state along with African kings and chieftains attended a midnight ceremony where President Jacob Zuma lit a flame, expected to stay alight the entire year, at the red brick, tin-roofed Wesleyan church where black intellectuals and activists founded the party in 1912.

Absent because of his frailty was Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first black president who is just six years younger than his movement. The world icon was jailed for 27 years by the racist white government and his organization was formerly declared a terrorist group by the United States.

Joy at the ANC's leading role in ending white minority rule in 1994 was tinged with sadness over its failure to bring a better life to most South Africans, and corruption scandals that have embroiled its members in recent years.

"It means a lot to be alive when the ANC is celebrating 100 years of its existence," Mayor Tulani Sebego of Bergville told Associated Press Television News.

He said the party had gained strength along with challenges, "but it has managed to come through it to today, it is here, 100 years and I want to believe it will reach 200 years."

The stadium at Bloemfontein, upgraded to a 45,000-seater for the 2010 soccer World Cup, overflowed Sunday with crowds that spilled outside, dancing and singing under a blazing sun.

"We need to ensure that our program of transforming our country is accelerated and taken to new steps," Zuma said in an afternoon address, flanked by an aide holding an umbrella.

He acknowledged the problems confronting the ANC, saying it needs to "defeat the demon of factionalism" and to take "urgent and practical steps to restore the core values, stamp out factionalism and promote political discipline."

Snapped bungee plunges tourist into African river

CANBERRA, Australia (AP)—An Australian tourist bungee jumping in Africa plunged 365 feet (111 meters) into a river when her cord snapped, but she managed to swim to safety with a broken collarbone and her legs tied together.

Erin Langworthy told Nine Network television news Sunday that she blacked out briefly when she hit the Zambesi River on the border of Zambia and Zimbabwe on Dec. 31.

"I felt like I'd been slapped all over," the 22-year-old from Perth said.

Video taken of the jump shows the cord snapping and Langworthy smacking into the river before the current pulled her into rapids.

"You get sucked under and then you pop up so it's very disorienting—I didn't know which was up or down," she said.

She said the trailing cord repeatedly snagged, so she "had to swim down and yank the bungee cord out of whatever it was caught on to make it to the surface."

Langworthy swam through the rapids to reach the Zimbabwe bank.

Southern Province Police Commissioner Brenda Muntemba told the Post Zambia newspaper that Langworthy was treated at a clinic in Zimbabwe before being evacuated to South Africa.

The jump from the Victoria Falls Bridge is operated by Safari Par Excellence, whose website describes the bungee experience as "111 meters (365 feet) of pure Adrenalin!"

WORLD BRIEFS

UK police identify body found on queen's estate

LONDON (AP)—The remains of a woman found on one of Queen Elizabeth's vast estates belong to a 17-year-old missing girl, British detectives investigating the murder said Sunday. Forensic tests identified the decomposed body as that of Latvian Alisa Dmitrijeva, who was reported missing from her home in eastern England in August, Norfolk Police said. The body was found by a dog walker on New Year's Day in woodland three miles (five kilometers) from the royal residence at Sandringham House. Sandringham, in rural Norfolk, is a vast estate where Queen Elizabeth II and her family traditionally gather to celebrate the holiday season. The royal family is not implicated in the crime in any way.

Danes capture pirate mothership, free 14

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP)—The Danish navy says it has captured a suspect pirate mothership off the Horn of Africa and rescued 14 people who were being held hostage on it. The navy says its warship HDMS Absalon, which participates in NATO's Ocean Shield anti-piracy force, encountered the ship Saturday and the crew boarded it. They arrested 25 suspected pirates and freed 14 people from Iran and Pakistan. Navy spokesman Mikael Bill says the hostages are most likely fishermen who had been held for around two months and the pirates were using their fishing vessel. The hostages were transferred onto the HDMS Absalon, where they were able to call their families. The Danish Navy said Sunday further investigations are needed to determine what will happen to the suspected pirates.

Russian child in stroller swept into sewage system

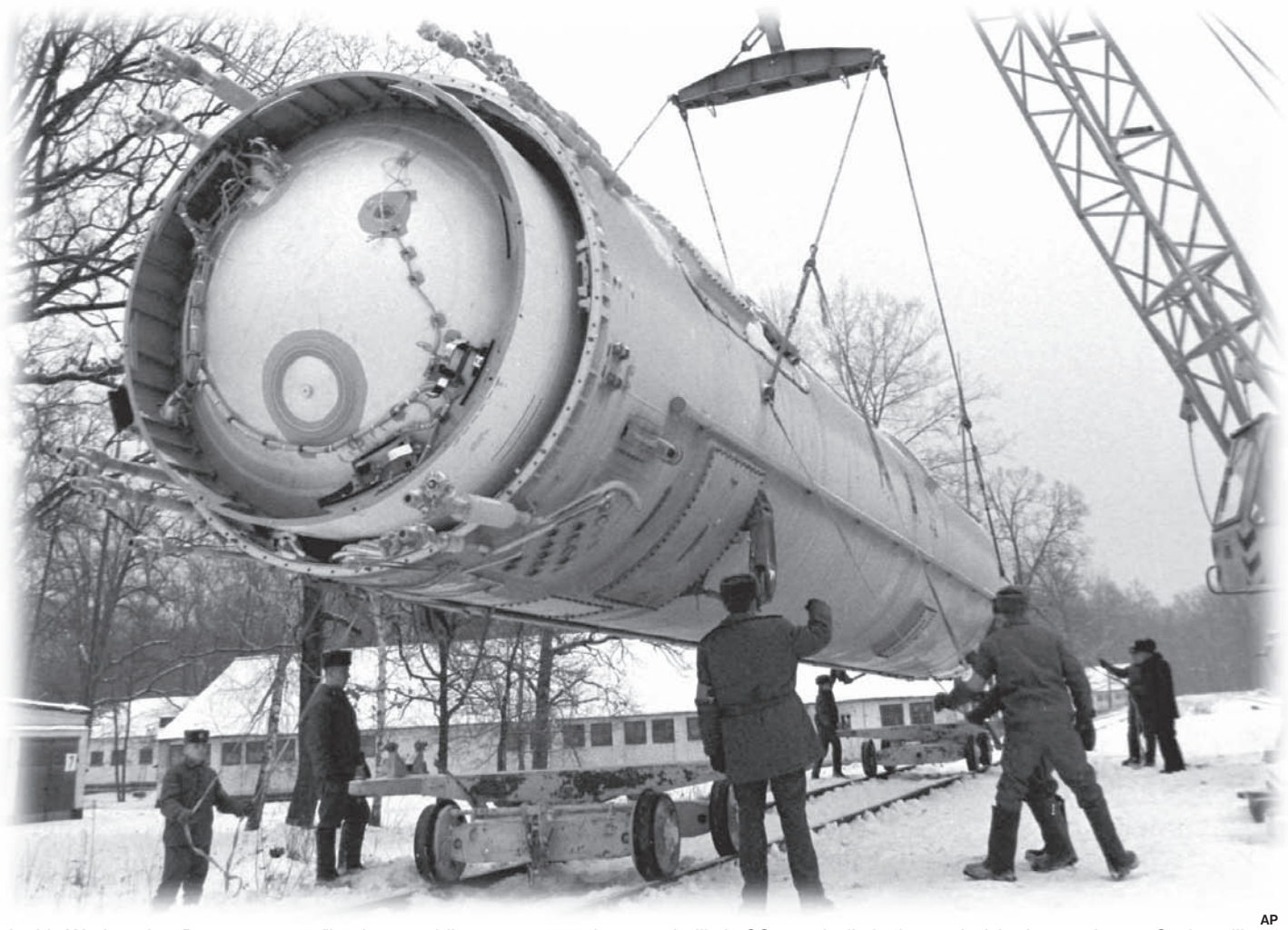
MOSCOW (AP)—Police in a provincial Russian city say an 18-month-old child was swept into the underground municipal sewage system when a sidewalk collapsed because of a ruptured pipe. The mother, a 26-year-old policeman's wife, was pushing the child in a stroller in the city of Bryansk when the ground caved in underneath them. Police say the woman was rescued, but the child was swept away by the current into a collecting tank for the sewage system and was presumed dead. Investigators say they are working to determine the cause of Sunday's accident, but suspect faulty construction of the system may be to blame.

Focus

AVOIDING ARMAGEDDON

How the threat of loose Soviet nukes was avoided

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV
ASSOCIATED PRESS



AP

In this Wednesday, Dec. 24, 1997 file photo, soldiers prepare to destroy a ballistic SS-19 missile in the yard of the largest former Soviet military rocket base in Vakulenchuk, Ukraine, 220 kilometers (137 miles) west of Kiev.

MOSCOW (AP)—The doomsday scenario of Soviet nukes falling into the hands of rogue states or terrorists has, as far as is known, remained fiction, thanks to a massive U.S.-Russian effort to lock the weaponry up safely after the Soviet Union fell apart.

The vast nuclear arsenal, scattered among several newly independent nations, was secured because Russian military officers acted with professionalism and honesty, Moscow and Washington shared clear priorities, and the U.S. taxpayer coughed up billions of dollars, former top officials who dealt with the Soviet nuclear legacy say.

Even so, as the world marks the 20th anniversary of the Soviet demise at the end of 1991, occasional doubts surface about whether the system was airtight. There's the Russian scientist who perhaps went to work for Iran's nuclear program, an old claim that portable nuclear devices went astray, the seizures of smuggled fissile material in the 1990s.

But difficult though it is to prove a nuclear negative, U.S. and Russian officials insist in interviews with The Associated Press that the fears of the 1990s have not become a reality, even though the challenges of safeguarding Soviet nukes were daunting at the time.

"Twenty years on it's pretty hard to believe that not a single nuclear weapon has shown up loose," said Graham Allison, who played a key role in the effort as an assistant secretary of defense under President Bill Clinton and now heads Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

A quick U.S.-sponsored deal had Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan handing all their nukes over to Russia, and American cash helped safeguard the weapons at a time when the new governments couldn't even afford to pay military wages on time. Additional U.S. incentives offered jobs to disgruntled nuclear scientists from the former Soviet Union, many of whom were courted by nations like Iran.

There have been gnawing fears that a few Soviet nukes still might have gone missing, but experts with inside knowledge say that if it were true the world would already know.

"If somebody or a terrorist group got hold of a nuclear weapon, they would probably use it as quickly as possible," said Steven Pifer, who served as U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, held other senior State Department posts and is now director of the Brookings Institute's Arms Control Initiative. "So the fact that you haven't seen a nuclear detonation ... reflects the fact that the nuclear weapons have been maintained in a secure way."

That was no mean achievement given the enormous proliferation risks posed by the Soviet breakup.

The economic meltdown of the early 1990s forced many officers of the once-proud Soviet Army to moonlight as security guards or even cab drivers And with the wars and ethnic clashes triggered by the Soviet collapse came strong incentives to steal weapons for the black market.

The immediate task for the Russian military was to quickly remove thousands of battlefield weapons such as nuclear artillery shells and land mines from other Soviet nations. These relatively compact arms posed the biggest proliferation risk and often were stored close to areas of conflict.

"The military officers who did the job were the unknown heroes," said Alexander Golts, a Russian independent analyst. "It's hard to imagine what might have happened if the tactical nuclear weapons had remained on the territories of the states involved in military conflicts."

The next goal, strongly backed by Washington, was to remove strategic nuclear weapons from Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. The first two agreed quickly, but Ukraine, which had inherited enough of the Soviet arsenal to be the world's third largest nuclear power, balked at the plan, setting the stage for years of diplomatic battles.

A war for custody of nukes? "All this was quite terrifying," said Allison.

Pifer said that some Ukrainian officials longed to keep them, but around 1992 concluded their country had neither the money nor the expertise to remain a nuclear power.

Also, the world's worst nuclear disaster had happened in 1986 at Chernobyl, in Ukraine, and public opinion wasn't keen on keeping nukes.

Still, Ukraine bargained for years for compensation in tough talks that sometimes made even seasoned diplomats lose their temper.

"There was a lot of pressure, they threatened us with all kinds of economic sanctions, they wanted to get this issue over with fast," Leonid Kravchuk, Ukraine's then president, told the AP.

Ukraine insisted the U.S. provide hundreds of millions of dollars to pay for safeguarding and dismantling the arsenal. From Russia it demanded nuclear fuel as compensation for the highly enriched uranium in the warheads. And it wanted security guarantees from all the nuclear powers.

"We didn't want to get naked for free," Kravchuk said.

Tensions over which country military officers in Ukraine should swear allegiance to—Russia or Ukraine—also stoked tensions. In February, 1992 an entire squadron of combat jets flew from Ukraine to Russia after their pilots refused to take the oath.

Ukraine eventually got the money and security guarantees it was seeking, but the Russians had other obstacles to overcome. For instance, the economy was so bad that the military struggled to pay wages on time, and top brass were reduced to struggling to give the strategic nuclear forces personnel better rations, said Maj.-Gen. (Ret.) Vladimir Dvorkin, a nuclear weapons expert in the Russian Defense Ministry in the early 1990s.

Control over the security of nuclear weapons never slackened, Dvorkin said. "People realized their responsibility because they were fully aware of the dangers."

Nuclear arsenals surrendered by former Soviet republics had to be safely transported long distances to centralized storage sites and secured. Dismantling missiles, bombers and submarines as required by the 1991 START treaty with the U.S. also required huge funds.

"Russia badly needed assistance," Dvorkin said, and the U.S. responded quickly with the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program initiated by Sens. Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar, which provided billions of dollars in equipment and know-how to help Russia and its neighbors deal with the Soviet nuclear legacy.

"It seems to me that Nunn-Lugar was one of the smartest uses of defense dollars we ever made," Pifer said.

Under the program, the U.S. provided reinforced rail cars to carry nuclear warheads, high-tech security systems for storage sites and dismantling mothballed nuclear subs.

"The program provided colossal support," Dvorkin said.

Building on their cooperation in securing the Soviet nuclear arsenals, Moscow and Washington moved later to reduce the number of nuclear weapons held by both sides, most recently with the New START deal signed by Presidents Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev that took effect last year.

But while Dvorkin says the military in Russia and other ex-Soviet nations kept tight control over atomic weapons, numerous civilian agencies were far less diligent in keeping track of nuclear materials at their disposal. "Fissile materials at nuclear power plants were controlled by one agency, and research reactors were in the hands of another one," he said.

Oversight at civilian structures was less stringent than in the military, creating conditions for a steady string of thefts of radioactive materials in the early 1990s, which were later seized by police in Germany and other European nations.

"There were such cases, but they didn't entail catastrophic consequences," Dvorkin said, noting that the amounts of uranium and plutonium seized in Germany and elsewhere were extremely small, each measuring just a few grams.

Another major worry for the West was that scientists with nuclear know-how would be hired by unfriendly forces.

The U.S. responded quickly by setting up research centers that distributed grants to scientists "so that they can do civilian research and do it in Russia and avoid the temptations perhaps to go to countries such as North Korea and Iran," Pifer said.

"Thousands of scientists participated in this project in Russia and Ukraine, so we know of thousands of people who stayed behind," he said. "Whether we got everybody, I don't know."

Iran was working actively to attract scientists from Russia and other ex-Soviet lands, and the International Atomic Energy Agency in a report released in November said a foreign expert helped Iran on some of its alleged weapons-related experiments by working on ways to set off a nuclear blast through a sophisticated multipoint explosives trigger. Diplomats identified him as former Soviet scientist Vyacheslav Danilenko, who worked in Iran for several years.

Despite the assurances from Russian and U.S. officials that no Soviet nukes got lost in the chaos of the post-Soviet years, allegations occasionally surfaced that some of the weapons went missing.

Gen. Alexander Lebed, who headed Russia's Security Council for several months in 1996, made the most stunning of such claims in 1997, saying the military lost track of dozens of suitcase-sized portable nuclear devices. Lebed issued several contradictory statements about the number missing, and Russian officials rejected his claim.

Dvorkin said Lebed, who died in a helicopter crash in 2002, didn't know what he was talking about.

"I personally know people who were counting the weapons at centralized depots, and they have confirmed that nothing was stolen," he said. "They did the check after Lebed's statements and made sure that everything was in place."

Overdrive

Suave Equus brings cachet to Hyundai

By MATT DEGEN
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

HYUNDAI/MCT

The Hyundai Equus has a 5.0-liter V-8 that makes a stout 429 horsepower.

Pssst: Wanna know how to get a $100,000 executive sedan for 40 percent off? Buy a Hyundai. More specifically, buy a Hyundai Equus.

Go on. Take a second to recompose yourself.

If you have even a passing interest in cars, you probably already know that the Korean automaker has been on a roll for a few years now, making cars that provide great value, good fuel economy and pretty looks.

Heck, in 2009 Hyundai even won the automotive equivalent of an Oscar when its Genesis sedan nabbed the North American Car of the Year award.

But $60,000 for a Hyundai? Really?

Yes. And let me tell you, it's the real deal.

This is Hyundai's first U.S. entry into the true luxury landscape. The Equus is meant to take on cars such as the Mercedes-Benz S Class, BMW 7 Series and Audi A8. You know, cars that rich people drive.

No doubt you'll still need to bring home more bacon than your proletariat neighbors, but less of the proverbial pig than, say, the trust-fund crowd.

NUTS & BOLTS

Hyundai Equus Signature

- Type: Four- or five-passenger, rear-wheel-drive luxury sedan
- Engine (2012 specs): 5.0-liter V-8
- Total power: 429 horsepower, 376 lb.-ft torque
- Fuel economy rating: 15 mpg city/23 highway
- Base price, with destination: $59,650
- Price as equipped, estimated: $59,650
- Overall: Superb fit and finish, plush accommodations, roomy, fuel economy

The Equus comes in two versions, the base "Signature" edition like the one I drove over a week, or an even more option-laden one called, appropriately enough, "Ultimate."

Both are rear-wheel-drive and feature the same engine, a 5.0-liter V-8 that makes a stout 429 horsepower. The car also now features an eight-speed automatic transmission, vs. the six-speed one on the 2011 car.

But it's inside where the big Equus truly shines. Think leather, wood and technology. And lots of it. The owner's manual, it must be noted, comes loaded on an iPad.

Yes, it even sounds weird as I write this, but this is a Hyundai that drips with luxury. Had I not already experienced more than a brush of this in the Genesis, I wouldn't believe it myself.

But there I was, sitting in an incredibly plush seat that, in addition to featuring 12 directions for the perfect fit and heating and cooling to keep my butt at a comfortable temperature, offers a massaging function.

Other aspects of the front reminded me of the Genesis, a superb car in its own right, yet here taken to the next level. A big navigation screen and a quasi-complicated rotary dial that acts as your master control are standard, of course. Heated steering wheel? Check. Classy, center-mounted analog clock? It's there. And let's not forget the Lexicon sound system. My model "only" had seven speakers and a subwoofer; if you find yourself still in want, you can spring for a system with a whopping 17 speakers. Mercy.

One of my few quibbles with the Genesis—its suspension on some roads—is silenced here. In the Equus, it's smooth, if not sporting, sailing all the way.

And the Equus is big and roomy. At more than 203 inches long, it will not be confused with the Accent subcompact. Yet for its girth, the Equus is surprisingly easy to maneuver.

As a driver, I appreciated the Equus. But part of me was hard pressed to find that thing about it that would make it really worth $20,000-plus over the Genesis.

Then I sat in the back seat. It was actually in the back that I realized the Equus for what it is, and where it really differentiates itself from the Genesis: This is a car that makes for a superb chauffeur's vehicle.

If you are an executive or diplomat who is often driven around yet still happens to be pinching pennies, look no further than the Equus. The back of the car, which can be outfitted with three or two seats, is as cavernous and well-appointed as a private jet. Forget legroom; you could practically stretch out and sleep back here.

With the Equus, Hyundai has proven that it can not only be a player in a whole new league, but a true competitor.

HYUNDAI/MCT

The Hyundai Equus has a 5.0-liter V-8 that makes a stout 429 horsepower.

When to keep, when to sell older car

By BRAD BERGHOLDT
MCCLATCHY-TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

QUESTION: My car is now eight years old and has 112,000 miles on the speedometer. It's in pretty good shape, and I'm still fairly satisfied with the way it looks and drives, but I'm at a crossroads. I'm wondering if it's a good time to trade it in and start over with a new car. A large part of my decision will be based on whether my present car is likely to break down or begin to nickel-and-dime me to death. Do you have any suggestions about how I might make the best decision?—Fran Colleti

ANSWER: Fran, perhaps one way of doing this is to look at your car as if you were not the owner and were considering buying it. I'd start by having a AAA inspection or similar comprehensive vehicle inspection performed. This may cost $100 or more, but the thorough checkup will determine the well-being of many parts and systems that could be troublesome in the future and provide a solid baseline of mechanical condition. Besides the written report, I'd be curious to hear the technician's verbal feelings about your car model in general and yours specifically. If you decide later to retire the car, a favorable inspection printout will be a helpful sales aid.

Additional considerations are paint and upholstery condition, care given with maintenance and usage, evidence of rust and UV damage, collision-repair quality (if any), resale value, and repair frequency information for that make and model of vehicle. My personal used car search bonanza is a well-maintained vehicle that's been garaged rather than parked outside.

Resale value can be obtained by going to KBB.com, where you can easily estimate trade-in value and private party sale values. Common problems and repair frequency information are also simple to find online. Type the year, make and model and the word "problems" into your search engine, then take a look at what Autos.msn.com, Edmunds.com, CarComplaints.com and other sites have to say about your particular vehicle. Your research can help you make the best decisions on posting it on Craigslist or simply driving it to the dealer.

I won't suggest what you should do with the above information. It's purely up to you. If you hold onto the car, it might be a good idea to bank perhaps one-third the monthly cost of a new vehicle in anticipation of repairs that will occur down the road. A bright side to hanging on to it several more years is the true dollar per mile cost is perhaps the lowest it will ever be, since the majority of value depreciation has already occurred and it's probably not yet a candidate for major or expensive repairs.

In my dad's day, a car with 112,000 miles was considered used-up. Most vehicles today can run 200,000 to 300,000 miles with good care. The occasional faulty ball joint or power window motor will certainly occur, but the powertrains are highly durable.

Paint is another story. Once the clear coat starts jumping off, the car will look homely, and an inexpensive paint job, if there is such a thing, will likely disappoint, especially after 2-3 years. The mechanicals of a modern car are better than the cosmetics. You'll know when it's time.

Brad Bergholdt is an automotive technology instructor at Evergreen Valley College in San Jose, Calif. Readers may send him email at under-the-hood@earthlink.net; he cannot make personal replies.

Life & Style

Imagine this: 'American Idol' without Seacrest?

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—Both Fox and Ryan Seacrest say they want Seacrest to stay as host of "American Idol" after this year. Whether that will happen was unclear Sunday even as both sides promoted this month's launch of the 11th season of the country's most popular television show.

Seacrest

"It's a tough negotiation and one that will come to conclusion, I think, pretty quickly," Fox Entertainment President Kevin Reilly said.

Seacrest is not signed beyond this season and is also involved in talks with corporate owners of NBC Universal, where he has a contract at E! Entertainment. There have been several reports that NBC is considering Seacrest as a potential replacement if Matt Lauer decides to leave the "Today" show.

Seacrest had little to say Sunday about the possibility of moving into a new morning job.

While such talk is "flattering," he said, "that job will be that person's job as long as that person wants the job."

"American Idol" continues to be a TV steamroller. Yet network TV is in tough economic straits, and many millions of dollars are tied up in contracts with Seacrest and judges Jennifer Lopez, Steven Tyler and Randy Jackson.

As for Seacrest's contractual status, the key word Sunday was "imagine."

"It's very hard to imagine the show without Ryan," Reilly said. "We certainly want to keep him. There's no creative discussion there whatsoever. It is a deal issue."

Said Seacrest: "I've done this for the last decade. I love doing it, so I can't imagine not being on every week."

Added Fox alternative show chief Mike Darnell: "We love Ryan and I can't imagine the show without him."

The next few weeks will show whether love translates to a deal.

Darnell said that after major changes on "Idol" last year with the additions of Tyler and Lopez and some revamping of the middle weeks of the competition, this year there will be relatively minor tweaks. Two big challenges when competitors reach the Hollywood stage will be requiring them to sing some 1950s era songs, and sing with the accompaniment of only one instrument.

Tom Hanks' Web series to stream on Yahoo

By JAKE COYLE
AP ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—Tom Hanks' long gestating Web series is coming to Yahoo.

"Electric City," an animated futuristic series Hanks has been developing for years, will premiere on Yahoo this spring. The series includes 20 episodes, each three- or four-minutes long.

Hanks

Yahoo, along with Hanks and production partners Playtone and Reliance Entertainment, are set to formally announce plans for the series Tuesday at the International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas.

For Hanks, the release of "Electric City" caps the actor's efforts to find the right avenue for the project. He first tried to make the series using puppets. He earlier announced it would be released in early 2011.

The series is set in a seemingly peaceful city situated in a post-apocalyptic world. Many of its themes are socially conscious topics relevant to today, including energy consumption.

"It was always our intent to have this project live and breathe online, and we felt Yahoo would be the perfect home," said Gary Goetzman, co-founder of Playtone, Hanks' production company. "'Electric City' is the first of its kind, a clutter-breaking, global 360 digital project."

For Yahoo, "Electric City" is its first entry into scripted original programming. Yahoo has been beefing up its online video with reality series and wrap-up news shows, many of which rank among the most-viewed series online.

"Electric City" will be distributed online and through tablet devices with the usual interactivity and social media connections, but also a few new features. Most notably, it will be available in several languages, including Spanish and French.

"On the surface, the Electric City is utopia and under the surface, Electric City is secrets and heavy-handed state control," says Erin McPherson, vice president and head of original programming at Yahoo. "What we found really compelling is that this is perfect for a highly digital audience, a lean-forward audience who likes to utilize the medium of the Internet."

MINISTRY OF GOSSIP

The gospel on celebrity and pop culture

LIONEL HAHN/ABACA PRESS/MCT
Cher, here with her son Chaz Salvatore Bono, is honored with a hand and footprint ceremony at Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles, California, November 18, 2010. Chaz has a new book and documentary on OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network.

Chaz Bono is saving up to get his bottom-half surgery done

Chaz Bono, who has been relatively quiet about whether he had penis surgery in the process of changing from female to male, is finally speaking up about saving for that procedure.

It's another of many recent life changes for the "Dancing With the Stars" veteran, who broke off his engagement to Jennifer Elia in December after six years of dating, first as a lesbian couple, then as man and woman.

"I was in a fairly typical heterosexual relationship...," he told Rolling Stone. "Anyway, I think Jen wished I wouldn't get the bottom done, but she understood my need to." (Elia had described herself as bisexual.)

After going through the transgender process, Bono—born Chastity, to Cher and Sonny Bono—legally became a man in May 2010.

The surgical decision is more complex than some might think: Bono has to choose between a procedure that builds from scratch, or one that works with what's there—a body part that's already enlarged thanks to male hormones. Then there are other options; Bono likened it to shopping for a car. For example, he told the mag, he'd like to be able to stand up to urinate, because sitting down in a men's room can be a pretty gross experience. And that particular feature would need to be built in.

"You have to understand, though, for me the life transformation has already happened."

And what's the MSRP that Bono's saving up to cover?

"The doctor I want to use is in Belgrade. It's going to be a little cheaper there. Probably $25,000, maybe $45,000, I really don't know." ***(Christie D'Zurilla)***

For Casey Anthony, 'things are starting to look up,' she says

Casey Anthony, America's most infamous mother, has a new dog, a new computer and a new outlook on life—at least according to a private video diary she made last October that somehow made it online Thursday.

In the 4:20 black-and-white video recorded Oct. 13, Anthony talks about her new computer, reveling that it's hers and not something she has to give back. She also has a new dog.

Anthony doesn't specify exactly where she is while recording the video, but she does say she'll be leaving there in late February or March, around the time of her birthday.

Cheney Mason, one of Anthony's former defense attorneys, who successfully argued last year that his client was not guilty in the death of her 2-year-old daughter, Caylee, told the Fox affiliate in Orlando, Fla., that Anthony did not know how the video, which was meant to be private, ended up online.

There is no mention of Caylee in the short video, but Casey does express lots of excitement about her computer and being able to record her thoughts, however vague they may be.

"It's just a little surreal how much things have changed since July and how many things haven't changed," she says. "But the good thing is that things are starting to look up and things are starting to change in a good way."

She makes brief mention of the probation sentence she's serving for check fraud, unrelated to the noted murder trial that ended last July.

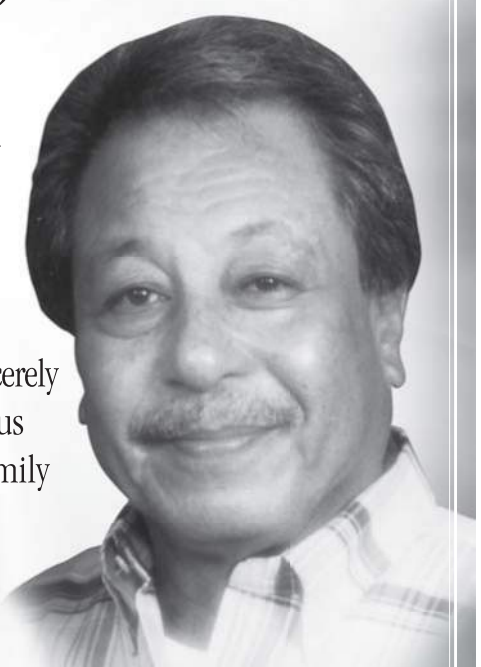
Now that one video log has surfaced online, what are the chances more will surface? And will Anthony bring the dog on camera? She says she may. ***(Patrick Kevin Day)***

Ministry of Gossip: http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/gossip/

Message of Appreciation

On the passing of our beloved

†NICHOLAS (NICK) SABO RAMON



We would like to extend our most heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all our families and friends, from far and near, for their love and support as we mourned the loss of my husband, our father and grandfather. It has been a comforting blessing to each of us. We sincerely appreciate your taking time to be with us at the daily masses and rosaries, the family viewing, funeral mass and services. Your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time for our family will be remembered always. God bless you all for your acts of kindness and expressions of sympathy in our great loss.

Those we love we never lose, for always they will be loved, remembered, treasured, always in our memory.

Thank you!

Frances Sablan Ramon, Children and Family

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$4.75	All Day Admission For Kids (ages 3-11)
$6.00	Student Admission with Valid I.D.
$6.00	Military with Valid I.D.

TIMEWARP TUESDAY

$6.00 ALL SHOWS ALL DAY/NIGHT (EXCLUDING HOLIDAYS AND RESTRICTED FEATURES)

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Friday, Jan. 6th through Thursday, Jan. 12th, 2012

OPEN SEVEN DAYS A WEEK

★ ★ ★ NOW SHOWING ★ ★ ★

The Darkest Hour

Friday		4:25	7:25	9:40
Saturday	1:25	4:25	7:25	9:40
Sunday	1:25	4:25	7:25	
Monday thru Thursday		4:25	7:25	

Emile Hirsch, Olivia Thirlby
Science, Fiction • Rated PG 13

Synopsis

Director Chris Gorak (Right at Your Door) teams with producer Timur Bekmambetov for this tense apocalyptic thriller centering on the fight for survival waged by five youths who find themselves stranded in Moscow during an alien invasion. As the invisible extraterrestrials absorb all of Earth's energy and life forms, finding a means of escaping the unstoppable attackers becomes a seemingly impossible task. Emile Hirsch, Olivia Thirlby, and Max Minghella star.

We Bought A Zoo

Friday		4:10	7:10	9:30
Saturday	1:10	4:10	7:10	9:30
Sunday	1:10	4:10	7:10	
Monday thru Thursday		4:10	7:10	

Matt Damon, Scarlett Johansson
Comedy, Drama • Rated PG

Synopsis

A widower (Matt Damon) purchases a zoo in order to bring his family back together in this Twentieth Century Fox adaptation of Benjamin Mee's autobiographical memoir. Cameron Crowe (Almost Famous) writes and directs based on a script by Aline Brosh McKenna.

★ ★ ★

The Adventure of Tintin

Friday		4:30	7:30	9:50
Saturday	1:30	4:30	7:30	9:50
Sunday	1:30	4:30	7:30	
Monday thru Thursday		4:30	7:30	

Jamie Bell, Andy Serkis
Adventure • Rated PG

Mission Impossible: Ghost Protocol

Friday		4:15	7:15	9:55
Saturday	1:15	4:15	7:15	9:55
Sunday	1:15	4:15	7:15	
Monday thru Thursday		4:15	7:15	

Tom Cruise, Jeremy Renner
Spy film, Action • Rated PG 13

The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo

Friday		4:00	7:00	10:00
Saturday	1:00	4:00	7:00	10:00
Sunday	1:00	4:00	7:00	
Monday thru Thursday		4:00	7:00	

Daniel Craig, Rooney Mara
Thriller • Rated R

Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked

Friday		4:20	7:20	9:35
Saturday	1:20	4:20	7:20	9:35
Sunday	1:20	4:20	7:20	
Monday thru Thursday		4:20	7:20	

Jason Lee
Children's/family • Rated G

Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows

Friday		4:05	7:05	9:45
Saturday	1:05	4:05	7:05	9:45
Sunday	1:05	4:05	7:05	
Monday thru Thursday		4:05	7:05	

Robert Downey, Jr. Jude Law
Action, Mystery • Rated PG 13

● NO PASSES ■ NO PASSES OR SUPER SAVERS

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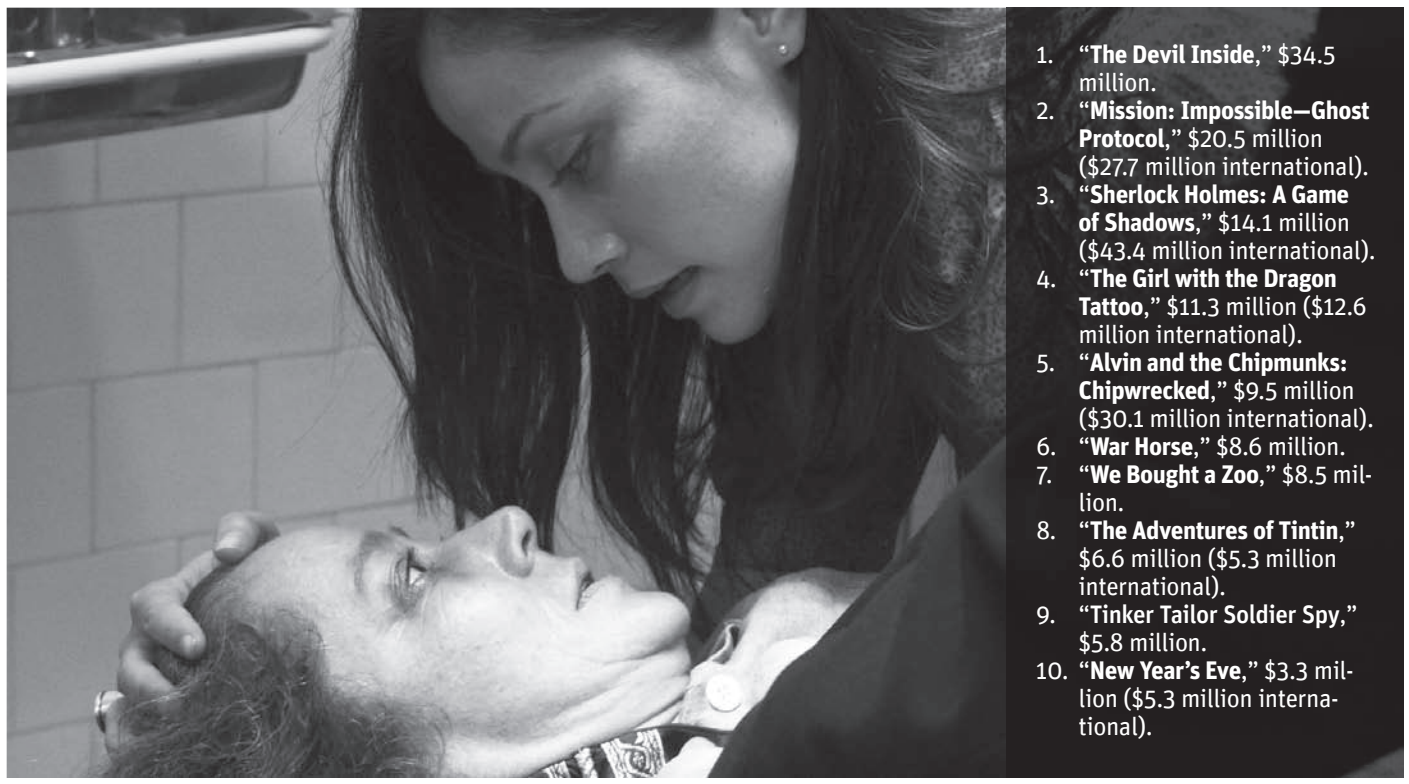
www.gohollywood.com



AP

In this film image released by Paramount Pictures, Suzan Crowley plays Maria, left, and Fernanda Andrade plays Isabella Rossi in a scene from "The Devil Inside."

1. "**The Devil Inside**," $34.5 million.
2. "**Mission: Impossible—Ghost Protocol**," $20.5 million ($27.7 million international).
3. "**Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows**," $14.1 million ($43.4 million international).
4. "**The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo**," $11.3 million ($12.6 million international).
5. "**Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked**," $9.5 million ($30.1 million international).
6. "**War Horse**," $8.6 million.
7. "**We Bought a Zoo**," $8.5 million.
8. "**The Adventures of Tintin**," $6.6 million ($5.3 million international).
9. "**Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy**," $5.8 million.
10. "**New Year's Eve**," $3.3 million ($5.3 million international).

'Devil Inside' lifts Hollywood spirits with $34.5M

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The fright flick "The Devil Inside" scared up a monstrous $34.5 million opening weekend to help Hollywood exorcise its recent box-office demons, according to studio estimates Sunday.

The surprise hit from Paramount Pictures debuted well above industry expectations as horror fans crowded theaters for the low-budget tale about exorcists trying to free a woman possessed by evil spirits.

Between "The Devil Inside" and solid results for holdover films, Hollywood's business soared over the first full weekend of 2012 after a sluggish holiday season that ended a ho-hum year at the box office.

Overall domestic revenues totaled $144 million, up 29 percent from the same weekend last year, when "True Grit" led with $14.6 million, according to box-office tracker Hollywood.com.

Paramount already is well into profit with "The Devil Inside," an independently produced movie that the studio bought for $1 million. It's the latest such low-budgeted horror acquisition for the studio, which bought "Paranormal Activity" cheaply and turned it into a $100 million sensation that was followed by two hit sequels.

Like "Paranormal Activity" and another Paramount hit released in January, "Cloverfield," "The Devil Inside" is a fictional tale shot in a mock documentary style.

According to Paramount, 59 percent of viewers for "The Devil Inside" were under 25 and 85 percent were under 35, prime viewers for Hollywood who had not turned up in their usual numbers for much of last year.

With a sales campaign that bypassed traditional newspaper and TV advertising in favor of online teasers and cryptic marketing, Paramount managed to intrigue young adults who have not been all that interested in the rush of family films and Academy Awards contenders that crowded into theaters over the holidays.

"The Devil Inside" was the only new wide release of the weekend after the holiday crush, historically a good time for something different to sneak in and become an unexpected hit, said Don Harris, head of distribution for Paramount.

"For that under-25, under-35 audience that's looking for something else, that first weekend in January has always been a great weekend to release a movie," Harris said. "When we saw that weekend open, we took it."

"The Devil Inside" bumped another Paramount hit, Tom Cruise's "Mission: Impossible—Ghost Protocol," out of the top spot after two weekends at No. 1. "Ghost Protocol" slipped to No. 2 with $20.5 million, raising its domestic total to $170.2 million.

Just a day before "The Devil Inside" opened Friday, industry analysts had expected "Ghost Protocol" would remain No. 1 this weekend. The most optimistic forecasters figured "The Devil Inside" might manage $15 million, less than half the business it actually did.

"This one caught everyone looking, but the devil got his due," Hollywood.com analyst Paul Dergarabedian said. "It's just very difficult to track the horror fan base, no question about it."

"The Devil Inside" is following the pattern of many horror movies, which pack in crowds on opening day then tumble quickly after that. With $16.85 million on Friday, "The Devil Inside" did nearly half of its business in the first day, with revenues falling to $11.75 million Saturday and an estimated $5.9 million Sunday.

Critics trashed "The Devil Inside," and even the fans who came out to see it gave it mixed to bad reviews. Paramount reported that 16 percent of the audience gave it an A grade, while 19 percent gave it an F. Two-thirds of the audience gave the movie a grade of C or lower.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Hollywood.com. Where available, latest international numbers are also included. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

Fox to start Saturday night cartoons

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—Long known for its Sunday night cartoons headlined by "The Simpsons," Fox is planning to offer new animated material late on Saturday nights and on an experimental new digital channel.

The network said Sunday that the new effort will be led by Nick Weidenfeld, the former head of program development for the Cartoon Network's Adult Swim series. The cable network has run a popular series of late-night cartoons on weekdays that has successfully reached a young male audience that TV executives consider valuable and elusive.

Saturday's 90-minute cartoon block would begin at 11 p.m. ET. Fox hasn't programmed aggressively in late nights and hopes the new series will provide some competition for NBC's "Saturday Night Live," said Kevin Reilly, Fox entertainment president. It will start in January 2013.

Reilly, during a news conference, offered hints but left an air of mystery around the future of some popular Fox prime-time shows like "House," "Glee," "Fringe" and "Terra Nova."

Fox appreciates its Sunday cartoons like "The Simpsons," which will soon air its 500th episode. But success there left relatively little room for experimentation.

"There has been a lot of talent and a lot of product that we've wanted to pursue over the years that did not fit the prime-time mold," Reilly said.

The digital channel would be available online, through cable on demand, as mobile applications and on game consoles, and it's somewhat experimental, Reilly said. It would allow Fox to take chances on programming of different lengths, he said.

Reilly conceded he's put off some decisions on prime-time shows that have doubts about their future. One is the long-running medical drama "House," which Reilly said months ago was probably in its last year. He said he will meet soon with the show's producers to decide; he did say it's very unlikely any of the show's characters would be spun off into a new series.

He praised producers of "Fringe" for helping Fox drum up some interest in its Friday night schedule. But he noted the show is expensive to produce and at its current ratings, it's a money-loser for the network.

"Please don't start the letter-writing campaign right now," Reilly said. "I can't take that."

The prehistoric adventure series "Terra Nova" is doing moderately well, but Fox had been hoping for more. Reilly said the show has struggled creatively in its first season and will face tough competition for a time slot.

"If we had more holes on our network, we would be thrilled to lock that in," he said. "We're going to decide very soon."

"Glee" will be back next season, despite some early ratings troubles, he said. The current high school students will be graduating, said Reilly, who left unanswered how many of those cast members will be returning.

Critics pick 'Melancholia' as best film of 2011

NEW YORK (AP)—The National Society of Film Critics selected Lars von Trier's drama "Melancholia" as the best picture of 2011 during its annual meeting Saturday.

The society also named the movie's star, Kirsten Dunst, as 2011's best actress. The film ponders the end of the world.

The group, comprised of 58 prominent movie critics from around the country, met Saturday at Sardi's Restaurant in New York City to make its picks.

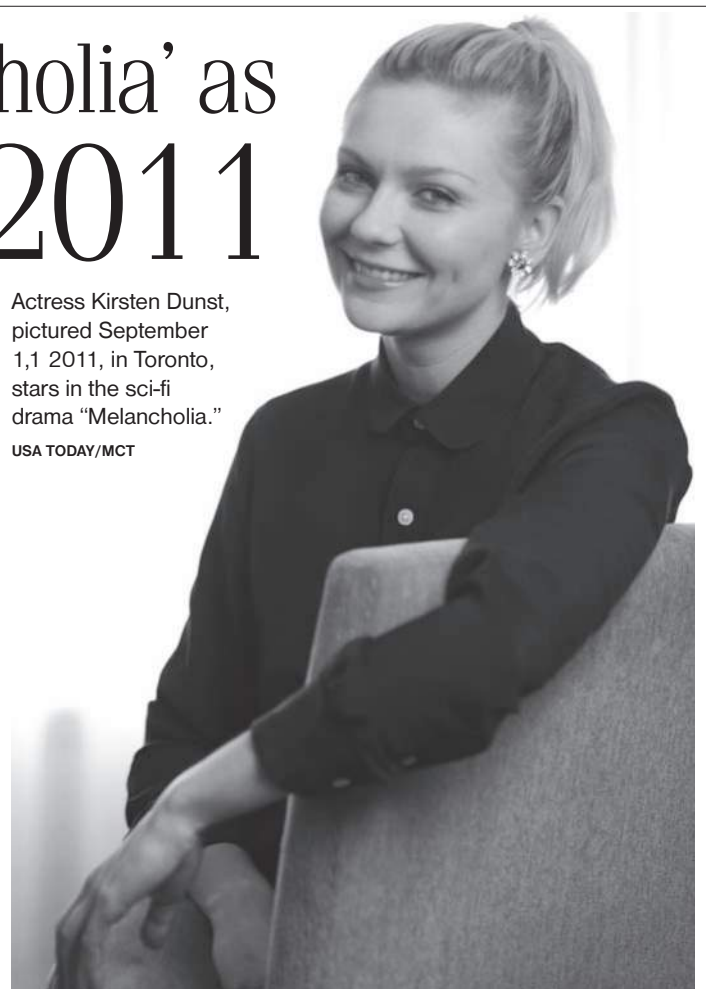
Society members chose Brad Pitt as best actor for his performances in "Moneyball" and "The Tree of Life." Albert Brooks, in "Drive," and Jessica Chastain, in "The Tree of Life" and two other movies, received nods for supporting roles.

Terrance Malick was picked as best director, also for "The Tree of Life," and Werner Herzog's "Cave of Forgotten Dreams" was selected as best nonfiction film.

The society, founded in 1966, also works to promote film preservation and historically important movies.

This year, it recognized Brooklyn's BAMcinematek for its retrospective of films by Vincente Minnelli, known for musicals and dramas; and the Criterion Collection for its DVD package of "The Complete Jean Vigo."

The group's picks can help galvanize interest in films ahead of the Academy Awards in February, but are not known to heavily influence who gets picked for the Oscars.



Actress Kirsten Dunst, pictured September 1,1 2011, in Toronto, stars in the sci-fi drama "Melancholia."
USA TODAY/MCT

Sinead O'Connor reconciles with husband

Sinéad O'Connor's love life has another chapter. Actually this is more like an extended cut of the previous chapter. She announced on Twitter that she's back with her husband of less than a month.

The Irish singer, who married Dublin substance-abuse counselor Barry Herridge in Las Vegas in early December, then announced their separation a couple of weeks later, has called off the divorce proceedings.

As she put it late Tuesday, "yay!!! me husband is a big hairy cave man an came to claim me with his club :) and now im in cave-land.. yay!!"

When one fan, who obviously doesn't speak cave man, tweeted to ask for confirmation that the singer now wasn't getting divorced, O'Connor responded, "Yup that's wot it means. An I can add to my lingerie collection. Size uk 12 btw for anyone wanting to send any. 36b. :)"

Previously, O'Connor had written a long post on her website announcing the breakup of the relationship due to people in her husband's life urging him away from her and to a "wild ride" in Las Vegas on their Dec. 8 wedding night, when self-described non-drinker O'Connor went looking for weed to smoke and ended up with a handful of crack instead.

Never a dull moment in the O'Connor household.

O'Connor says she's slowing things down with husband No. 4 and that they plan to act like boyfriend and girlfriend (or cave man and cave woman) for a while. Either way, this isn't likely to be the last of the O'Connor love drama in 2012. ***(Los Angeles Times)***

'24' movie scheduled to begin shooting this spring

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—Fans of Jack Bauer have something to look forward to. A movie based on the old Fox series "24" is scheduled to begin shooting this spring.

Actor Kiefer Sutherland said Sunday that he expects to go to work on the movie in late April or May. Sutherland played Bauer, the centerpiece on the pulse-quickening adventure series that ended its television run in 2010.

Even with the movie ahead of him, Sutherland is already working on a new Fox series. "Touch" features him as the father of a super-intelligent son able to understand odd connections in the world and even predict the future.

After portraying Bauer, a character who is often required to repress emotions, his new character Martin Bohm shows his feelings. Sutherland said he hadn't expected to be doing a new TV series so soon, and wasn't specifically looking for a character as different from Bauer as possible.

"The reason I wanted to do this is it really spoke to me," he said.

Fox will offer a sneak preview of the show Jan. 25 before it joins the network schedule in March.

In this file image released by the Department of Defense, actor, director and musician Gary Sinise performs with his "Lt. Dan Band" during the fourth annual "America Supports You" concert as part of Military Appreciation Month at the Pentagon in Washington.
AP

'Forrest Gump' actor Sinise to raise money for vet

TEMECULA, Calif. (AP)—Actor Gary Sinise, known for playing a soldier who loses his legs in the film "Forrest Gump," wants to stage a benefit concert to raise money to build a home in Temecula, Calif., for a Marine who lost his limbs in Afghanistan.

The Los Angeles Times reports that Sinise, now starring in TV's "CSI New York," is expected to ask the Temecula City Council on Tuesday if he can hold a concert tentatively on March 1.

Sinise's Lt. Dan Band, named for his movie character, would perform and raise money for Marine Lance Cpl. Juan Dominguez, who lost his legs and right arm in 2010.

The Gary Sinise Foundation and the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation have built several such homes for wounded veterans.

Loretta Lynn postpones 2 shows to heal her knee

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Country legend Loretta Lynn has rescheduled her first two shows of the year to give her knee more time to heal. The 76-year-old singer underwent total knee replacement surgery in the fall and suffered from pneumonia.

Daughter Patsy Lynn Russell tells The Associated Press that Lynn's doctor thought she needed a couple more weeks of physical therapy to return to top form. Russell says her mother has been busy rehearsing with her band and preparing for her 2012 tour.

According to Russell, Lynn said she is feeling so good, she "might even put her dancing jig back in the show."

Lynn was scheduled to perform in Ashland, Ky, and Durham, N.C., this weekend. Those shows will now take place in February and April, respectively. Lynn's next gig is Jan. 21 in Miami, Okla.

Caring neighbors fill void left by child's inattentive parents

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DearAbby

DEAR ABBY: "Friend of a Lonely Child" (Nov. 7) complained his wife didn't like him befriending the neighbor boy, "Donny," whose father is terminally ill.

Many years ago, I was that child. My home life was a mess, and the neighbors ended up raising me and teaching me about life. I am positive the only reason I didn't end up in prison was the concern of those people.

Mr. and Mrs. P. taught me manners and work ethic, Mr. and Mrs. M. schooled me in kindness and compassion, and the local store owner, Mr. R., taught me economics. He'd never let my credit go over $3, and he'd charge me a quarter a week if I didn't pay it off! Here I am at 51, having never made a credit card interest payment or taken a loan to term, thanks to him. I loved those neighbors more than I loved my own family.

"Friend," your wife is right. You CAN'T save everyone, but a little kindness and mentoring can change a child's life. And all it will cost you is a little time.

THANKFUL FOR OHIO NEIGHBORS

DEAR THANKFUL: Like you, many readers encouraged this man to continue in his role of father figure. My newspaper readers comment:

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have two daughters who are now grown. Many of their friends spent a lot of time in our home and at our dinner table. Many of them were from troubled backgrounds. Sharing our home with others never deprived our daughters of love and attention. Instead, they learned the importance of giving.

After the friends grew up I was surprised and touched when they told me how much the time we shared had meant to them. I never realized I was making a difference.

Abby, "Friend's" wife is blessed to have such a caring husband. Yes, sometimes we ARE our brother's keeper.

CHRIS IN ARIZONA

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: As a single mom of a son, I was fortunate to have men around who took him under their wings. They provided friendship, male bonding and examples of how a true man treats a woman. I never fail to express my thanks to their wives and family members for allowing their husbands and fathers to spend time with my son. Because of it, he has become a better man and future husband. Maybe "Friend" and his wife can set predetermined times at which Donny can visit for male companionship.

PROUD MOM IN PENNSYLVANIA

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: As the mother of two daughters, I didn't have a great deal of interaction with 10-year-old boys until my nephew came to stay with us for an entire summer. His father was gravely ill and succumbed while the boy was living with us. As his mom dealt with the issues concerning his father's death, our nephew became a member of our household. It ended up being a tremendous experience.

"Friend's" wife needs to open her heart. She'll be given a wonderful gift and help a child in the process.

PHYLIS IN NORTH CAROLINA

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Big Brothers/Big Sisters is an excellent organization, but it cannot replace the more frequent contact of a neighbor who recognizes and empathizes with the boy's fatherless situation. If "Friend's" heart leads him to mentor the neighbor boy, he should continue to build that friendship. Whether or not his wife feels the same shouldn't guide his actions. One makes many commitments to one's spouse, but closing one's eyes and heart to those in need isn't one of them.

DENNIS IN KANSAS

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: It's a pity the wife doesn't recognize that her daughters have a chance to see a man at his best—caring for and protecting someone in need. The girls will seek these qualities in the men they bring into their lives, and it will add joy to the entire family. The best families always have plenty of love to go around for everyone.

STEPHEN IN EUGENE, ORE.

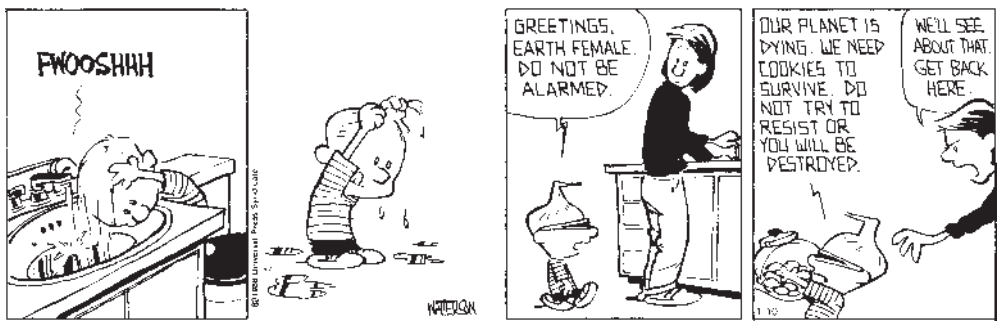
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

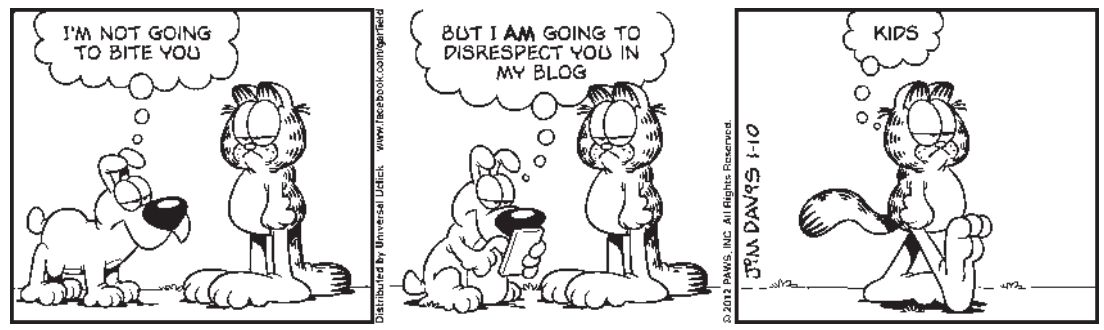
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


FWOOSHHH
GREETINGS, EARTH FEMALE. DO NOT BE ALARMED.
OUR PLANET IS DYING. WE NEED COOKIES TO SURVIVE. DO NOT TRY TO RESIST OR YOU WILL BE DESTROYED.
WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT. GET BACK HERE.

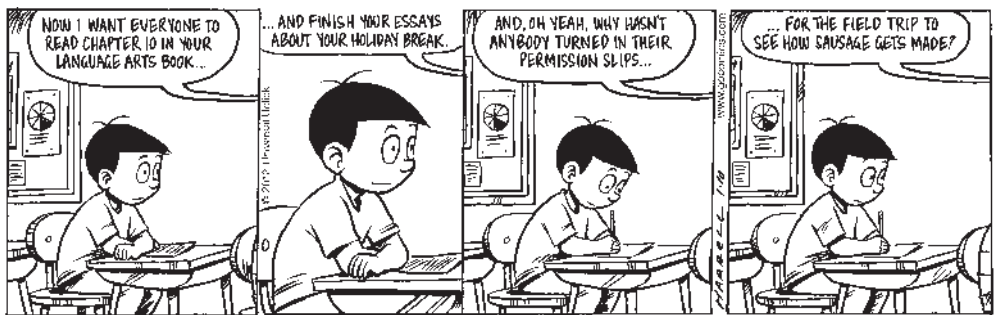
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


NOW I WANT EVERYONE TO READ CHAPTER 10 IN YOUR LANGUAGE ARTS BOOK...
...AND FINISH YOUR ESSAYS ABOUT YOUR HOLIDAY BREAK.
AND, OH YEAH, WHY HASN'T ANYBODY TURNED IN THEIR PERMISSION SLIPS...
...FOR THE FIELD TRIP TO SEE HOW SAUSAGE GETS MADE?

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

Here.
Here WHAT?
MY HANDS ARE DIRTY. I NEED THEM WASHED.
I'M NOT WASHING YOUR STUPID HANDS!
READ THE SIGN, BUB.
DANG. HE'S GOT U.S.
EMPLOYEES MUST WASH HANDS

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Swiss peaks
5 Omega preceder
8 Old letter opener
12 Stead
13 Aries animal
14 Cut, as hair
15 Vend
16 Risque
18 Away from the Internet
20 Robust
21 Part of ESL
22 "— the ramparts ..."
23 Flowerless plants
26 Illegally ahead of the football
30 Bullring bravo
31 Diner order, for short
32 Collection
33 SUV's milieu, maybe
36 Ballroom favorite
38 Actress/author Sedaris
39 Rowing need
40 Part of Hispaniola
43 Eccentric
47 In the wings
49 Boleyn or Bancroft
50 El —, Texas
51 Sportscaster Cross
52 Little lice
53 Press
54 Chef Boy-Ar- —
55 Tend texts

DOWN
1 As well
2 Gladly
3 Money
4 Morose
5 Tine
6 Secure
7 Global currency org.
8 Uses Brillo
9 Troubles
10 Laugh-a-minute type
11 Agile
17 Staff leader?
19 Office-holders
22 Frequently
23 Egg-yung link
24 Sprite
25 Ump
26 Anti-quated
27 Doctrine
28 Society newcomer
29 Greek vowel
31 Chesapeake, for one
34 Betrays
35 Leave out
36 U.K. fliers
37 Debonair
39 "The Three Faces —"
40 Kachina worshipper
41 Somewhere out there
42 In that case
43 Shrek, for one
44 Oklahoma city
45 Opposititionist
46 Exam
48 Help

Solution time: 21 mins.

C	R	A	M	■	M	O	B	■	L	I	L	A
R	I	S	E	■	O	N	O	■	A	N	O	N
F	G	A	D	■	D	F	M	O	C	R	A	T
W	A	P	I	T	I	■	B	R	I	E	F	S
■	■	■	C	A	F	E	■	B	E	T	■	■
D	E	M	O	L	I	S	H	■	R	U	D	E
I	R	E	■	L	E	T	I	N	■	R	U	R
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■	■	D	U	B	■	E	A	V	E	■	■	■
A	D	A	G	I	O	■	L	E	N	G	T	H
D	E	M	E	N	T	I	A	■	E	U	R	O
A	I	F	S	■	I	V	Y	■	A	R	E	S
M	I	S	I	■	S	E	A	■	S	U	E	I

Yesterday's answer 1-10

1	2	3	4	■	5	6	7	■	8	9	10	11
12				■	13			■	14			
15				■	16			17				
18				19			■	20				
■	■	■	21			■	22			■	■	■
23	24	25			■	26				27	28	29
30			■	■	31			■	■	32		
33			34	35			■	36	37			
■	■	■	38			■	39			■	■	■
40	41	42			■	43				44	45	46
47					48			■	49			
50				■	51				52			
53				■	54				55			

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18– only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Evan Handler, 51; Pat Benatar, 59; George Foreman, 63; Rod Stewart, 67.

Happy Birthday: You'll take on too much or overreact to situations and emotional misunderstandings. Take care of government matters and institutional, legal and financial concerns. You can ease your stress by prioritizing to eliminate debt and investing wisely. Experience will be your best teacher. Your numbers are 13, 17, 22, 25, 27, 30, 47.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Concentrate on you and the people you care about and you will make personal gains that will prepare you for future opportunities. Love is highlighted, and with a little experimentation you can enhance your relationship with someone special. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): You'll overdo, overreact and overspend unless you keep very busy producing what you do best and wheeling and dealing to get ahead. The bulk of your day should be dedicated to work and avoiding anything or anyone that can distract you. ✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Your creative ideas will lead to an unusual offer. Expect someone you help to connect you to a third party with a vested interest in something you want to pursue. Love and romance are in the stars, and a stronger commitment is apparent. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You'll be tempted to do too much for others, and you'll end up being taken advantage of if you don't say no. Emotional matters will lead to uncertainty regarding participation in a group endeavor. Equality must be the determining factor. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Don't let flightiness lead you down a lonely path. Take your ideas or a service you have to offer and find a way to expand your skills to satisfy a wider range of clients. Working from home will help pay down debt. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): An opportunity will arise from a conversation you have while networking, socializing or en route. Prepare to make a couple of changes, despite the inconvenience. Your willingness to compromise will help sweeten the deal offered. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): What you do for others will turn out to be beneficial. Participating in a fundraising event or a good cause will lead to a position that brings in extra cash. Don't let someone close to you hold you back. Follow your heart. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Bottling up your feelings will cause your problems to linger. The only way to get rid of the uncertainty you are feeling is to air whatever is bothering you so that you can continue to be productive and progress. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Put your money and your heart on the line. Be prepared to make a promise to someone who can match you mentally, physically and financially. You don't have to overspend to impress, but you do have to keep the momentum flowing. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): You've got what it takes to surpass the competition. Display what you can offer, but don't sell yourself short. Negotiate what you want into a long-term contract that will enable you to expand your plans, leading to higher returns. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Don't take a risk; the cost will be too high. Focus on things you enjoy doing and the people you love most. Now is the time to make changes that will lead to a higher income. Present and promote something you have to offer. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): You'll meet with difficulty if you don't upgrade your skills or find a new way to make money. Problems with partnerships will develop if you don't deal in fairness. Equality will get you much further than trying to take control. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are intuitive, sensitive and proactive. You are entertaining and spontaneous.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

	7						3	5
4					2		7	8
				8	5			
			8			6	1	
		8				9		
	2	9			6			
			5	6				
7	5		1					3
1	6						4	

Difficulty Level ★★ 1/10

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

6	1	9	4	5	2	3	8	7
2	8	3	9	1	7	5	6	4
5	7	4	6	8	3	1	2	9
8	2	6	3	7	1	9	4	5
3	4	1	5	2	9	8	7	6
9	5	7	8	4	6	2	3	1
7	3	5	1	6	8	4	9	2
1	6	8	2	9	4	7	5	3
4	9	2	7	3	5	6	1	8

Difficulty Level ★ 1/9

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

2012 NEW HAMPSHIRE PRIMARY **Solution: 10 letters**

S	S	V	E	L	E	C	T	I	O	N	S	K	L	A
I	S	E	I	C	N	L	N	A	M	S	T	N	U	H
S	T	E	A	C	A	G	L	S	R	U	O	H	A	C
E	E	S	R	T	E	R	M	A	M	A	S	Y	P	I
T	K	U	O	G	N	A	M	H	C	A	B	E	M	R
O	D	C	S	O	N	A	J	C	N	A	S	N	A	G
V	N	O	A	S	B	O	O	A	L	E	O	M	N	N
R	A	U	N	O	I	N	C	L	T	M	B	O	C	I
E	L	N	T	N	C	I	O	A	I	A	E	R	H	G
K	G	T	O	O	L	T	D	N	S	Y	R	R	E	P
A	N	E	R	B	S	I	E	S	E	T	A	T	S	R
E	E	D	U	S	D	E	A	R	E	S	U	L	T	S
P	W	P	M	N	S	D	W	S	E	T	A	B	E	D
S	E	N	A	T	O	R	O	P	R	I	M	A	R	Y
R	N	C	U	R	T	A	I	N	O	S	N	H	O	J

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Yesterday's Answer: Fishing

CLASSIFIED ADS

WHATZIT Solution:
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ATTORNEYS FOR PLAINTIFF

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION, Plaintiff, -v- HILBERT HENRY C. SAN NICOLAS, Defendant.) CIVIL ACTION No. 11-0322

SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANTS:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to Complaint, a copy which is served upon you hereby, within twenty-one (21) days after the fourth publication of this Summons, and to deliver or mail a copy of our answer to THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC, the Plaintiff's attorneys, whose address is Post Office Box 5222, Saipan, MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan. It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

DATED, this 5th day of January, 2012, by order of the Court:

/s/Clerk of Court

Saipan Grand Hotel
A TanHoldings Company

Position: (1) FOOD & BEVERAGE MANAGER
Qualifications: Strong background and experience in Food & Beverage preferably in the hospitality industry. Possess the ability to work quickly, accurately and independently in a fast-paced environment. 5 years work experience required preferably in a hotel. Supervisory duties include instructing; assigning, reviewing and planning work of others; maintaining standards; coordinating activities; allocating recommending and approving employee promotions, transfers and discipline, and recommending discharge. Inspects restaurant, picnic areas and cart groupings for safety, food quality and presentation, associate and guest interaction, and organization and cleanliness of front lines, kitchen and storage areas, etc. Recommends the purchase of additional / replacement equipment; obtains price quotes for and purchases supplies and other food / non-food products. Ensures locations prepare, present and serve food on a timely basis. Ensure areas are monitored and any variance from specifications corrected. Coordinates with the Food Purchasing area to develop, set and review menu cost, retail pricing and recipe cards including creating new food menu items and ways to present food attractively. Must be able to work a variable schedule on occasion, including early morning, evenings and/or weekends.

Position: (1) EXECUTIVE CHEF
Qualifications: 5 years work experience as a Sous Chef is required and preferably in the hospitality industry. The executive chef will train and manage kitchen personnel and supervise/coordinate all related culinary activities; estimate food consumption and requisition or purchase food; select and develop recipes; standardize production recipes to ensure consistent quality; establish presentation technique and quality standards; plan and price menus; ensure proper equipment operation/maintenance; and ensure proper safety and sanitation in kitchen. The executive chef may cook selected items or for select occasions. The executive chef may oversee special catering events and may also offer culinary instruction and/or demonstrate culinary techniques. The executive chef directly supervises kitchen personnel with responsibility for hiring, discipline, performance reviews and initiating pay increases. Typically reports to a food service director.

Position: (1) ROOMS DIVISION MANAGER
Qualifications: 5 years work experience preferably in the hotel industry. Able to plan, direct, and/or coordinate activities for the facility ensuring enjoyable experience for vacationing families and business travelers. Monitor departmental costs to ensure performance against budget. Must be able to solve problems quickly. Initiative, self-discipline and effective communication and interpersonal skills are essential. Proficient in Microsoft Office applications. Attend to crisis or emergency situations and perform service recovery. The ability to display a high degree of professionalism and integrity as befitting a member of management.

Position: (1) GUEST RELATION AGENT
Qualifications: 2 years work experience in providing quality customer service, preferably in hotel operations. Guest Relation Agent is responsible for providing guests fast, friendly and efficient service for the Chinese Tourim. Must have knowledge in Microsoft Office applications. Must have outstanding ability to perform several tasks at once. Must be able to work a flexible schedule including weekends, nights and holidays. Foreign language speaking skill is highly preferred.

Position: (1) TRAINING MANAGER
Qualifications: Minimum of 4 years work experience and training and must be a college graduate. Provides leadership and expertise for all Asia Pacific Hotel Saipan properties, primarily in tasks or functions of training, organizational development and employee relations and secondarily to provide assistance with programs of the Human Resources Division, to include but are not limited to quality control, work measurement, work methods and supervisory development. Consulting with other managers to identify training needs Drawing up an overall training plan managing a training budget producing materials for in-house training working with training providers to develop suitable course content evaluating the success of both individual training and the overall programmed. Managing regular staff appraisals and reviews, making sure staff have opportunities for ongoing development.

Position: (1) PROMOTIONS (EVENTS) MANAGER
Qualifications: Minimum of 2 years work experience and must be a college graduate. Must have working knowledge on overall hotel operations, sales and marketing promotions, departmental planning coordination of projects, activities, computer operation marketing, promotions, people management, different cultures and nationalities. Creating and managing a detailed budget is often a key component of event planning. When the client is a government organization, the coordinator must be aware of all applicable laws and ethics concerns. Hotel event manager is responsible for producing an outline of the event's needs. This outline includes such details as meeting space, lodging for guests, food and drink accommodations, telecommunications, audio-visual needs and transportation. Event coordinators also draw up a contract for the client to sign, spelling out all of the details agreed upon. Ability to speak a foreign language will be a plus.

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Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

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Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 6-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $27 for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of the packages below.

ADS	(PRINT)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$15	$27
• 5-Liner	$24	$39
• 3-Liner with picture	$24	$42
• 5-Liner with picture	$36	$57

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Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

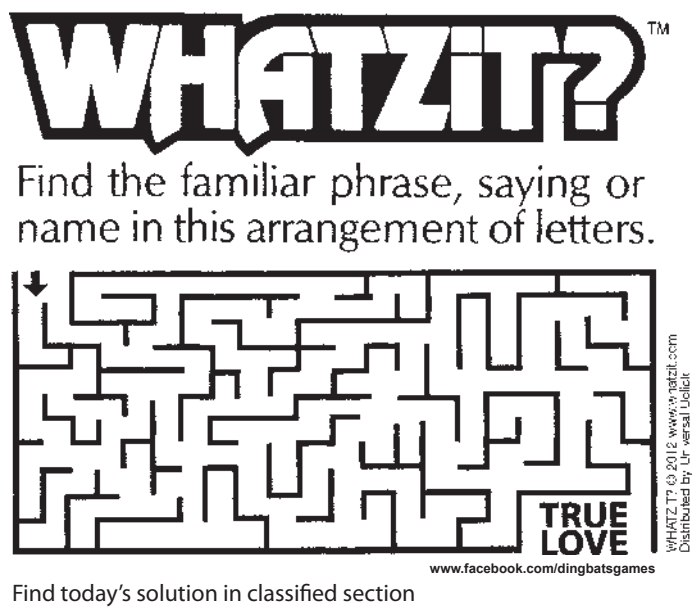
Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.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Look for 'big boy' football in BCS title game

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Les Miles squeezed out a smile, clenched his left hand nervously and extended his right hand toward Nick Saban. The coaches got in an awkward grasp, forced a bit of small talk, and then posed for the cameras behind the crystal trophy that only one of them can hoist toward the Superdome roof come Monday night.

This was the last of their pregame obligations - one final chance for Miles to deflect a query about whether top-ranked LSU is the favorite to make it to the BCS title NEXT YEAR, one more opportunity for Saban to show he's got a life beyond his stranglehold on the storied program at No. 2 Alabama (turns out he does, if watching the Weather Channel qualifies).

Now, let's get down to business.

LSU vs. Alabama, Part II. The BCS championship.

This time, it's for all the marbles.

Really.

The teams already met two months ago in Tuscaloosa, a so-called Game of the Century that was more of a Brawl in the Backyard, a brutal slugfest that sent both teams scurrying for the training room the next day and left fans around the country feeling a bit cheated by an old-fashioned defensive struggle in a college game now dominated by point-a-minute offenses.

Neither team made it to the end zone in that first meeting, even with the benefit of extra time. LSU won a battle of field goals, claiming a 9-6 overtime victory and stealing away the top spot in the rankings from the Crimson Tide.

Everyone expects more scoring in the rematch, but there's no way it's turning into one of those back-and-forth shootouts we've seen so many times this bowl season.

LSU head coach Les Miles, right, poses for a picture with Alabama head coach Nick Saban during a news conference for the BCS National Championship college football game Sunday, Jan. 8, 2012, in New Orleans.

"I'd expect it to be big-boy football," Miles said Sunday during his time on podium.

LSU (13-0) has already put up a body of work that clearly establishes it as the nation's best team. In addition to that Nov. 5 win at Alabama, the Tigers have victories over two other major bowl champions, Rose Bowl winner Oregon and Orange Bowl champ West Virginia. In all, they've knocked off eight teams that were ranked in The Associated Press Top 25, with only three of those games in Baton Rouge.

"The only team I've told them not to schedule is the Green Bay Packers," Miles quipped.

Maybe it's only appropriate for the Tigers to find one more daunting challenge standing in the way of a championship season - a great team they've already beaten.

"When we take the field, we'll be an emotional, fired-up football team," Miles vowed.

Alabama (11-1) didn't even make the championship game of the Southeastern Conference, but the Crimson Tide managed to sneak back into the national title race when Oklahoma State lost late in the season. In the strangest of twists, Saban's team will be the one celebrating its second national title in three years with a mere split of the season series with LSU.

Perhaps sensing just how fortuitous Alabama was to get a do-over, Saban wants his players to seize the moment.

"I would like for them to focus on the opportunity, not the pressure part," he said, "so that they really are zeroed into the mental practice and the things that when they go out there and play, they're going to be confident in doing their job the way they need to do it to have success."

That sort of robotic talk is typical of Saban, who spits out championship teams with assembly line precision, devoid of any flair. While Miles' disjointed grammar and goofy antics make it difficult to take him seriously at times, there are no such issues with Saban. He's all business, mixed in with a healthy dose of fear and autocracy.

"He's not like that all the time. He does have a personality," junior Robert Lester said. "But he's hard on us because he wants us to get the job done. On the field, he demands what he wants. By doing so, the guys go out there and try to do it perfect to please him. It works. You can tell, because we're playing in the national championship game again. When you come here, you've got to buy into the program. That's part of it. We've bought in and had success."

Saban did break character a few times Sunday.

When someone's cell phone went off in the back of the room with a loud song, the coach interjected, "Is that a little Al Green? Turn it up, man." He drew laughs when telling how he grilled anyone who wanted to go out on a date with his daughter. "None of them ever really answered me," he said, managing a slight smile. "They were so intimidated so I never got much good information."

Saban even revealed the morning routine he has with his wife.

"We get up at 6:15 every day and watch the Weather Channel for about 30 minutes before we start our day," Saban said. "I get most of my marching orders in that 30-minute segment of what we should do or how I should do it or why it's important to do it that way, what I need to talk to the team about. I get coached up very well in that 30-minute segment of the Weather Channel."

He might want to see if there's a Kicking Channel.

Alabama likely would have won the first meeting with LSU if not for the dismal performance by its two kickers. Cade Foster botched three field-goal attempts, including a 52-yarder after the Tide went the wrong way with its overtime possession. Jeremy Shelley also missed.

Given these are two defenses that take it personally when someone gets close to the goal line, Foster and Shelley are likely to be called on again in the championship game. But the Alabama offense hopes to make it a little easier on them this time. Foster's other misses were from 44 and 50 yards. Shelley failed to convert on a 49-yarder, far beyond his normal range.

"We've got to get them closer. We've got to get them kicking extra points. We can't be going for three points every time," Alabama lineman William Vlachos said. "Obviously, it's not the kickers' fault when we're throwing them out there for 50-yarders every time. That's on the offense, that's on the defense, that's on everyone else but the kickers. As a team, we're not putting the blame on them, that's for sure."

No one doubts the Alabama defense, which wouldn't look that out of place in the NFL with 260-pound linebackers Dont'a Hightower and Courtney Upshaw. The Crimson Tide led the nation in every major category, allowing a minuscule 8.8 points a game.

Bill O'Brien takes Penn St reins

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. (AP)—Sporting a Nittany Lions pin on the lapel of his dark gray jacket, Bill O'Brien took the podium, looked straight ahead and introduced himself with two quick, no-nonsense sentences.

"I feel like I'm a mentally tough guy right now. I feel like I'm the right guy."

And with that, the 42-year-old O'Brien, the New England Patriots' offensive coordinator the past four years, was off and running at his first briefing as Penn State's new head football coach, the school's first in nearly a half century.

It is his first head-coaching job.

"This is unbelievable," he said.

Actually, for many Penn State fans and former players all over the country, how this all came to be is exactly that - unbelievable.

Until Nov. 9, the Nittany Lions had been directed by the same person for 46 seasons - Joe Paterno, who was fired that day in the aftermath of a child sex abuse scandal involving retired assistant coach Jerry Sandusky. The case also forced the school president to resign.

Not only is O'Brien replacing Division I's winningest coach, he is joining a still-reeling school attempting to steer its way through federal, NCAA and Big Ten inquiries - not to mention criminal proceedings against former administrators. Sandusky, meantime, is awaiting trial after waiving a preliminary court hearing last month. He has denied the charges.

O'Brien will remain with the Patriots for the duration of their playoff run. New England has a bye this weekend.

The new coach said he would pull together his staff during the next two or three days, and get the assistants on the recruiting trail immediately while he works with New England. He will retain assistant Larry Johnson from Paterno's staff to coach the defensive line.

"I'm going to surround myself with good people," O'Brien said, "and I'm excited to do that."

His five-year contract, finalized Friday, included base compensation starting at $950,000, with a 5 percent increase each season. O'Brien will also collect another $1 million a year for radio and television work, as well as a $350,000 Nike contract.

Stricker keeps big lead at Kapalua

KAPALUA, Hawaii (AP)—Steve Stricker never looked comfortable at Kapalua until he walked off the Plantation Course with the same five-shot margin that he started with Sunday in the Tournament of Champions.

HYUNDAI Tournament of Champions

Right when he felt as if he was letting everyone back into the hunt, Stricker birdied his last four holes for a 4-under 69 that restored his cushion going into the Monday finish in Maui.

Webb Simpson had a 30-foot birdie putt on the 14th hole for a share of the lead. He missed. Jonathan Byrd had a 4-foot birdie putt on the 16th for a share of the lead. He missed that one.

Stricker, after a two-putt birdie on the 15th, chipped in for birdie on the 16th hole, then knocked in short birdie putts on the last two holes.

He was at 19-under 200, five shots clear of defending champion Byrd (67), Martin Laird (67) and Simpson, who also had a 69 while playing in the final group with Stricker.

Through three rounds, Stricker now is 13-under par on the five closing holes at the Plantation Course.

"I wasn't making any birdies, and it seemed like everybody else was," Stricker said. "I knew it was going to be tough. When you're leading a golf tournament, it's just hard to keep that momentum. When you're not making birdies, you feel like you're letting things slip away. I felt everyone was coming after me, and I was coming back to the pack."

A game that had felt so easy on Saturday when he shot 63 turned into a grind. That much became clear when he missed on the first easy birdie chance, the par-5 fifth where the second shot goes over a gorge.

He played conservatively out to the left, then chose to chip from just off the putting surface and knocked it over the green, having to scramble for par.

The more pars Stricker made, the more he let other players back into the hunt.

Stricker began the third round with a five-shot lead over Simpson, and only five players were closer than 10 shots of him.

Tebow rules in OT, lifts Broncos past Steelers

DENVER (AP)—"Pull the trigger," John Elway told his Denver Broncos star, Tim Tebow, trying to shake the quarterback from a three-game funk.

Tebow went one better—he pulled off an upset.

A rejuvenated Tebow connected with Demaryius Thomas on an electrifying 80-yard touchdown pass on the first play of overtime and the Broncos defeated the stunned Pittsburgh Steelers 29-23 in the AFC wild-card game on Sunday.

Wild doesn't begin to describe it. The play took 11 seconds and was the quickest ending to an overtime in NFL history.

Thomas hauled in a high play-action pass at the Denver 38, stiff-armed Ike Taylor and then outraced backup safety Ryan Mundy to the end zone.

"I was just saying, `Man trust your speed. Trust your speed. Don't cut back. Don't cut back.' And he kept it straight. He outran the guy," said Willis McGahee, whose fourth-quarter fumble helped Pittsburgh tie it.

"I was like `Oh my God, is he still running?' Please just go. Please. Please."

Tebow, who looked as startled as everyone else, chased down Thomas and knelt on one knee—Tebowing as it's known—in the end zone. Then he pounded a fist in triumph and took a victory lap.

"When I saw him scoring, first of all, I just thought, `Thank you, Lord,'" Tebow said. "Then, I was running pretty fast, chasing him—like I can catch up to D.T! Then I just jumped into the stands, first time I've done that. That was fun. Then, got on a knee and thanked the Lord again and tried to celebrate with my teammates and the fans."

Behind Tebow's 316 yards passing, the Broncos (9-8) are heading to New England for a second-round game against the top-seeded Patriots on Saturday night.

And, unlike Elway, who lost his first postseason start—to the Steelers at home in 1984—Tebow is 1-0 in the playoffs.

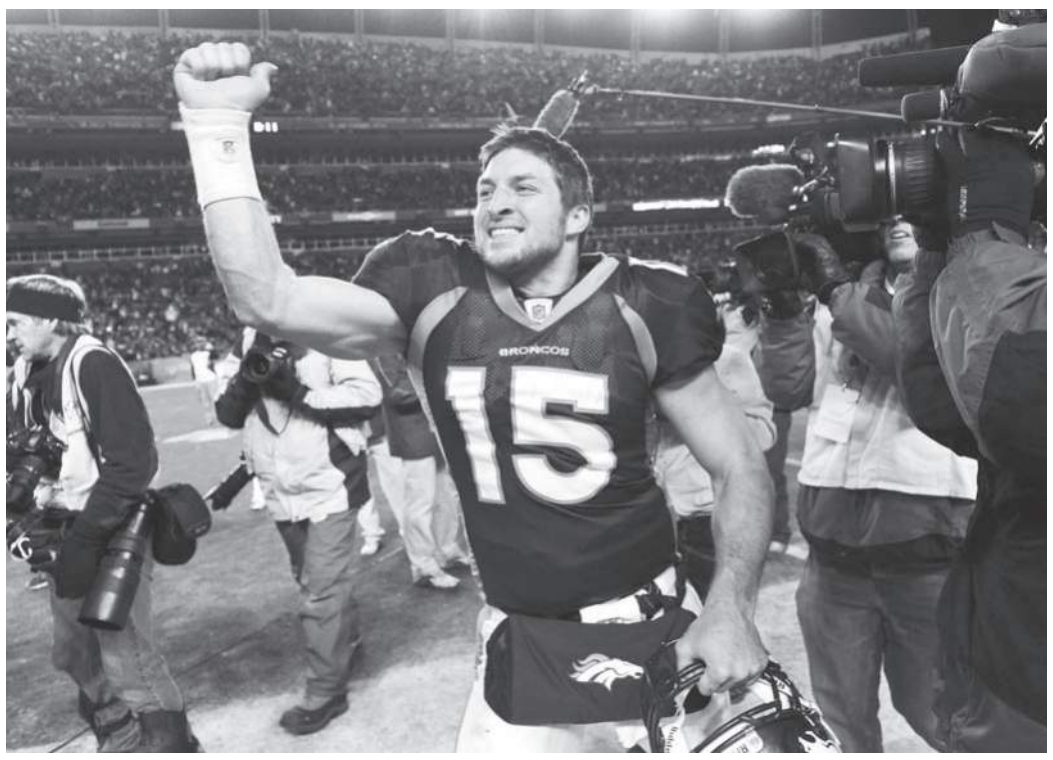
"We're just a fighting team. A lot of resilience," cornerback Champ Bailey said. "In any adverse situation, we'll find a way to get out of it. Everybody says we backed into the playoffs, we're in. We did something right along the way. We're in it. We won a game. Now, we've got to go try to win another one."

The Steelers (12-5) lost despite Ben Roethlisberger rallying injury-depleted Pittsburgh from a two-touchdown halftime deficit with 10 points in the final 10 minutes.

Pittsburgh called tails for the overtime coin toss, and it came up heads.

Tebow, who engineered five fourth-quarter comebacks and three OT wins in the regular season, wasted no time finding Thomas to end the game.

"They were the No. 1 defense and we are the No. 1 offense running the ball," Thomas said. "So, I feel like they wanted to make a statement and stop the run. I don't know if they forgot about the passing game. The last couple of games that we had, we were not passing the ball that great."



AP

Denver Broncos quarterback Tim Tebow (15) celebrates after beating the Pittsburgh Steelers, 29-23, in overtime of an NFL wild card playoff football game Sunday, Jan. 8, 2012, in Denver.

Thus, Elway's admonition.

"He showed he's a quarterback in the NFL, case closed," McGahee said. "They say he couldn't throw. They said we wouldn't be able to run the ball on them. We did that. I wonder what they're going to say next week."

Mundy was playing in place of Ryan Clark, the Steelers' leading tackler who sat this one out because of a blood condition that's exacerbated at altitude.

Clark was one of several Steelers sidelined or injured. Pro Bowl center Maurkice Pouncey was out, replaced by Doug Legursky, who had a bad snap right before halftime that moved Pittsburgh out of field goal range.

Thomas raced down the Broncos sideline, sending the crowd, including Elway, the Broncos executive vice president, into a frenzy at Sports Authority Field, which was rocking like the old Mile High Stadium back in the 1990s.

And Elway, the architect of so many those magical moments at the old place, celebrated on the field like he used to when he was the one engineering the triumphs.

The Patriots walloped the Broncos 41-23 last month, sending Tebow into a funk that included seven turnovers and a 40 percent completion clip - and prompting Elway to implore him to "pull the trigger" in the playoffs.

Did he ever.

Tebow completed 10 of 21 passes but Thomas hauled in four of them for 204 yards after his top target, Eric Decker, was lost to a left knee injury on the first play of the second quarter when he was hit by linebacker James Harrison.

Tebow threw two TD passes and also ran 10 times for 50 yards and a touchdown.

"I think we executed a little bit better. We tried to step up," Tebow said. "We knew it was win or go home. This team wanted to fight. We wanted to play another game."

Giants 24, Falcons 2

In East Rutherford, all the missing pieces—defense and a running game—are aligning at the right time for Eli Manning and the New York Giants. And just in time to play the Packers.

After routing the Atlanta Falcons 24-2 Sunday in the NFC wild-card game, the Giants head to Green Bay next weekend, a place where they will need all the help they can muster.

Manning carried the Giants (10-7) for much of the season, hoping the defense would get stingy, the pass rush would materialize and the running game would get on track. Now, all of that is happening.

"A great mix of run and pass and these guys have a great understanding of what our offense is," Manning said of the help he's receiving. "If we can get that run game going like we did in the second half, that opens up a lot of windows."

And if the defense remains impenetrable, watch out.

"If we can play defense like that, we will continue to make ourselves heard in this tournament," coach Tom Coughlin said.

Manning punctuated his best pro season by throwing for three touchdowns and scrambling for a 14-yard gain that woke up New York's offense in its first postseason victory since its Super Bowl upset of undefeated New England four years ago. Next up is as big a challenge: the defending champion Packers (15-1), who won here 38-35 in December.

Lakers beat Grizzlies for 6th straight home win

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Kobe Bryant scored 26 points, Andrew Bynum had 15 points and 15 rebounds, and the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Memphis Grizzlies 90-82 Sunday night for their sixth consecutive home victory.

Matt Barnes scored 15 points and Pau Gasol had 13 points and 15 rebounds for the Lakers, who have won six of eight after an 0-2 start despite playing the NBA's busiest early-season schedule, matching Oklahoma City with 10 games in the first 15 days.

Although they haven't lost at Staples Center since their season opener on Christmas, the Lakers committed a season-high 27 turnovers and never pulled away from the injury-depleted Grizzlies. Memphis had beaten Los Angeles in two of the last three meetings, including a 19-point blowout in the Grizzlies' last trip to Staples.

Rudy Gay scored 19 points to lead five players in double figures for Memphis, which wrapped up a three-game road trip with an unimpressive fourth quarter. The Grizzlies have lost two straight after winning their first two games following Zach Randolph's serious knee injury.

Marreese Speights scored 17 points, O.J. Mayo had 15 and Quincy Pondexter added 14 for the Grizzlies.

Barnes, who joined the Lakers' starting lineup last week, energized the club for the second straight game with strong defense in the fourth quarter, including a dramatic block of Speights' layup attempt with 3:34 to play.

Bryant had just four points in the fourth quarter, failing to score 30 points for the first time in four games. Los Angeles managed just 12 points on 5-for-18 shooting, but the Grizzlies had only 14 points of their own, never getting closer than four points.

At least the Lakers' awful 3-point shooting improved, with Steve Blake hitting three of the Lakers' six 3s.

Pau Gasol rarely guarded his younger brother, Marc, who managed just two points on 0-for-9 shooting. The Spanish brothers, traded for each other in early 2008, went to dinner on Saturday night in their usual tradition.

Blazers 98, Cavaliers 78

In Portland, LaMarcus Aldridge had 28 points and eight rebounds and the Portland Trail Blazers got off to a slow start but pulled away to beat the Cleveland Cavaliers 98-78 on Sunday night.

Wesley Matthews added 24 points for the Blazers, who led by as many as 24.

Kyrie Irving, the top pick in last June's NBA draft, had 21 points - 11 in the third quarter. Antawn Jamison, who was Cleveland's top scorer going into the game, made a 3-pointer for his only basket of the game, but had 11 rebounds.

The Cavaliers were only allowing an average of six fast-break points per game, but Portland had 22 even though the overall pace of the game seemed sluggish.

Suns 109, Bucks 93

In Phoenix, Steve Nash had 17 assists and 10 points in 27 minutes as the Phoenix Suns routed the weary and short-handed Milwaukee Bucks 109-93 on Sunday night.

The Suns beat the Bucks in Phoenix for the 24th straight time, the NBA's second-longest active streak behind San Antonio's 27 wins in a row at home over Golden State.

Phoenix shot 58 percent, led by Marcin Gortat, who scored 18 points on 9-of-10 shooting. Channing Frye went 6 of 7 and made all four 3-point tries to finish with 16 points. Seven players, including all five starters, reached double figures for the Suns.

Tobias Harris scored 15 for the Bucks at the end of an 0-5 road trip. Milwaukee last won in Phoenix on Feb. 21, 1987.

Grant Hill added 14 points, Shannon Brown scored 14, Markieff Morris 13 and Jared Dudley 11 for Phoenix, which has won two in a row for the first time this season.

Magic 104, Kings 97

In Sacramento, Jason Richardson scored a season-high 22 points, Glen Davis added a season-best 20 and the Orlando Magic beat the Sacramento Kings 104-97 on Sunday despite playing much of the game without foul-plagued Dwight Howard.

The All-Star center had five points and four rebounds in 20 minutes and spent most of the first three quarters in foul trouble. He didn't get his first rebound until 4 minutes into the fourth and was scoreless before converting a three-point play with 6:35 remaining, putting the Magic ahead 87-85.

Tyreke Evans had a season-high 28 points and eight assists for the Kings. DeMarcus Cousins, also hampered by fouls, had 16 points and 10 rebounds. J.J. Hickson added 14 points and 11 rebounds, and Marcus Thornton scored 13 points.

Timberwolves 93, Wizards 72

In Washington, Kevin Love had 20 points and 16 rebounds, Ricky Rubio had 13 points and a career-high 14 assists, and the Minnesota Timberwolves broke a two-game losing streak Sunday with a 93-72 victory over the winless Washington Wizards.

Spanish rookie Rubio also grabbed six rebounds and controlled the game during much of his 30 minutes off the bench. He entered with 1:30 remaining in the first quarter and quickly hit a 22-foot jump shot to start a 17-2 run that gave Minnesota the lead for good.

Six players scored in double figures for the Timberwolves, who shot 45 percent to open their first set of three games in three days during the lockout-shortened season.

Nick Young and Trevor Booker scored 14 points apiece to lead the Wizards, who dropped to 0-8 to extend their franchise-worst start to a season.

Thunder 108, Spurs 96

In Oklahoma City, Kevin Durant had 21 points and 10 rebounds, reserve James Harden scored 20 and the Oklahoma City Thunder became the first NBA team to win three games on consecutive nights this season by beating the San Antonio Spurs 108-96 Sunday.

Durant needed only three more assists to record his first career triple-double but instead sat out the entire fourth quarter with the rest of Oklahoma City's starters. The Thunder were able to coast to the finish for the second time in their back-to-back-to-back set after outscoring the Spurs 37-21 in the third.

Gary Neal scored 18 to lead the Spurs, who played without point guard Tony Parker after he came out of the game and walked to locker room midway through the third quarter.

Islander Tag Team 8-Ball League starts Jan. 21

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

The 19th Hole Bar is holding the 2012 Islander Tag Team 8-Ball Billiard League tentatively running from Jan. 21 to Feb. 11 at its new location in Puerto Rico, north of Grand Market on Middle Road.

The event is formatted as a best-of-three game series with two-person teams. Must be at least 21 to enter. Each player will compete in a singles match coupled with a doubles game. Two pairings will be played on Saturday and Sunday evenings starting at 7:30pm.

The tournament is not open to the advanced-level players in the Saipan Billiards Association's Agingan division.

There is a $20 entrance fee per team and registration deadline is Jan. 16. The event is open to the first eight teams that sign up.

Cash prizes will be awarded to the Top 3 finishers based on a predetermined point system.

The 19th Hole Bar recently received a special plaque of appreciation from the SBA during the 2011 Summer/Fall Budweiser Open 8-Ball League awards banquet last Sunday.

Formerly known as the USS Peleliu Club, the 19th Hole Bar relocated last fall. It offer darts, billiards, and music entertainment in a refreshing sports bar setting.

For more information, contact Rose Phillips at 788-3913.

Little League meeting tomorrow

Saipan Little League Baseball, Incorporated is holding a 5:30pm meeting tomorrow at the pavilion behind the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Topics to be discussed include finalizing membership documents and the 2012 team rosters and reviewing details about the required background checks of its current members. Sunday, Jan. 15, is the deadline for all active members to submit all paperwork before the SLL board transmits them to the Little League Baseball head office in Williamsport, PA.

Any interested parents or volunteers who want to get involved are welcome to attend the meeting. The membership drive will remain open until SLLBI's targeted season opener, slated for Feb. 15 at the Oleai Sports Complex.

Over 600 players from over 30 teams are expected to turn out this year and the SLLBI officers and coaches need all the help that they can get.

"We are striving to bring the SLL program back to the high standard it once held and parents involvement is a vital component to accomplishing our goal. Thus we are inviting all of the parents to come out and lend a helping hand. Let's work together for a successful 2012 season," SLLBI president Juan I. Tenorio said in a recent phone interview.

For more information, contact Tenorio at 483-4836 or SLLBI secretary Peding Tenorio at 287-8091. ***(Walter Cepeda Sutherland)***

ASTIG

From Page 28

ter the completion of the double-round robin competition over the weekend at the TSL Sports Complex.

In the boys U15 division, Astig Futsal swept their last two games to finish the youth league with a 6-0-0 win-draw-loss record. The Jeff Palacios-captained Astig Futsal secured the boys U15 title after outclassing rival Konflikt last Sunday, 6-5. Sean Perez and Tanapon Unsa delivered three goals apiece for Astig Futsal to retain their perfect record and seal the championship. Earlier last Friday, Astig Futsal downed We-D-Fly, 5-2.

Had Konflikt won last Sunday, it could have tied Astig Futsal and the winner would be decided by the number of goals scored in six games. In the end, Konflikt wrapped up the competition with a 4-0-2 slate, absorbing its twin losses at the hands of Astig Futsal.

Astig Futsal, which also has Marc Gerald Mora, Dale Ballesteros, Jireh Yobech, William Hinson II, and Greg Sablan as members and Jershwin Angeles as coach, collected a total of 66 goals, eight more than the 54 of Konflikt.

We-D-Fly finished third with its 2-0-0 card and 22 goals, while Shirley's Boys were winless and made only two goals.

Astig Futsal was also victorious in the girls U17, routing its foes in the last two play dates. Last Saturday, Astig Futsal clobbered Go Green Team, 16-0. Then last Sunday, the Jeraldine Castillo-captained squad whipped the Ayuyu, 8-1.

In its six wins in as many games, Astig Futsal scored 70 goals and gave up only six. Go Green Team finished second with a 3-0-3 record and 12 goals, while the Ayuyu was winless and logged only five goals.

The champion team is also composed of Melody Johnson, Lily Williams, Maica Aniana, Kyla Ito, Marielle Gariguez, Mikky Vargas, Dianne Pablo, Charlene Lizardo, Alexa Vergara, and Jeralyn Castillo.

In the boys U18, IT&E notched the championship after a crucial 7-3 win over the Thundercats last Sunday. IT&E and the Thundercats had a draw in their first meeting and last Sunday's second round outing decided the winner of the division.

IT&E finished the competition with a 5-1-0 record and 38 goals, while the Thundercats had a 3-1-2 card and 21 goals. Mean Machine was winless and had the least goals scored in the league with one.

IT&E players include Yi Shan Wang, Greg Kim, Evert Van Der Maas, Jin Han Yoon, Jacob Choi, Chris Park, Joon Lee, Dae Min Jeon, Moon Bing Hong, Jehn Joyner, Joshua Borja, and Taek Han Yoon.

Trophies were awarded to the division championships last night in a brief ceremony at the lobby of the Saipan Grand Hotel.

ROUSING

From Page 28

the half, 38-18.

Salas carried GCA with 13 points in the opening 20 minutes, but MHS keyed on him as the main focus of its defensive adjustments during the break.

Moreover, the Dolphins were just getting started on offense and mounted a huge 37-point push in the third quarter with Jim Lacsina leading the attack. Lacsina buried two treys for 10 points in the period and racked up a healthy dose of assists in the process.

The demoralized Eagles were contained to single digits for the second time, as they logged only seven points, and the game was pretty well out of reach by the start of the fourth frame.

MHS could have called off the dogs at that point, but elected not to pull out its starters until the last three minutes. The Dolphins flirted with 100 points in the match, but managed only one check after clearing their bench.

Caro led MHS with six points in the final period and finished with a team-high 18 points.

Lacsina raised some eyebrows from the crowd and turned in 16 in support, while Salas managed 15 on the short end for GCA.

Meanwhile, Saipan Southern High School and Mount Carmel School played in the second game in the opening day, but results of the match were unavailable at press time.

The season continues at 4pm tomorrow with MHS taking on MCS.

MHS 94 – Caro 18, Lacsina 16, Vertudez 12, Dela Rosa 9, Francisco 8, Suarez 7, Darag 6, Moran 6, Gut 4, Limes 4, Lapuz 2, Sablan 2.

GCA 39 – A. Salas 15, K. Kim 10, Lee 7, Sugul 3, Libut 2, D. Lee 1, J. Salas 1

Scoring by quarters: 21-8, 38-18, 75-25, 94-39.

SUBLEMENTE

From Page 28

the run part. The run leg took runners up to the one million gallon tank and back to Paupau.

"The current was a bit strong and when we made our turn, we were pushed away from the course," Sublemente said. "For the bike leg, it was a bit slippery as in rained last Friday night and early Saturday morning, so we really had to slow down especially at the FEBC road."

The swim leg was done side ways with the 15 participants heading to their right toward the concrete boat dock near the shore of Palms Resort. A few waves and cold water greeted swimmers at the start of the race at Paupau. Tsunami Saipan swimmer Kaisei Toda was first out of the water, finishing the first leg of the race in about eight minutes. He ended up placing third with a combined time of 59 minutes, about four minutes behind runner-up Ronald Villafria (55:19).

Sublemente, Villafria, and Toda (Top 3 overall and off-road division) were the only three participants to complete Enticer 1 in under one-hour mark.

For the road course, Florence Antonio was the first finisher and fourth overall, clocking in at 1:04:07. The road course had the same route for the swim leg, while the bike race started from Paupau to Banzai and back, and the run part brought participants to the FEBC sign and back to Paupau.

Joshua Berger came in at second with a time of 1:04:50, while James Abuy completed the Top 3, submitting 1:12:10.

Rachel Zuercher (1:05:32) was the first female to cross the finish line and could have reached PauPau earlier if she did not stop to check if Brad Ruszala was okay after a crash at FEBC. Joining her on the finishers list were Ben Babauta (1:10:41), Derek Chambers (1:12:32), Ruszala (1:14:30), Logan Mister (1:20:08), Angie Mister (1:27:55), and Miku (1:40:02) and Robert Torres (1:40:04).

After the race, Taga, Inc. president Wolf Mojica later raffled off Tagaman and XTERRA entries. Antonio won a free XTERRA entry, while Logan Mister took the Tagaman ticket. More pre-XTERRA/Tagaman races will be held in the next two months and athletes are encouraged to join, as more entries to the March competitions will be raffled off.

NMASA

From Page 28

requested a meeting with Gov. Benigno R. Fitial to discuss the takeover issues and had also secured a copy of a contract between the Korea-based LG Twins and the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs.

DCCA cited the contract with LG Twins as one of the reasons to rescind the three-party memorandum of understanding that gave Northern Marianas Athletics the power to operate and manage the track and field facility and three other venues inside the complex. NMA is a member of NMASA and the latter was also a signatory of the MOU signed in April last year. NMA's takeover of the track facility and two others was the first big step towards NMASA's goal of managing the complex.

DCCA in an earlier letter to NMASA and NMA said it nullified the MOU because the agreement conflicts with the NMHC block grant condition and the contract between the government agency and the visiting Korean professional baseball team.

Though the MOU cancellation was not illegal, as section 20 of the agreement stated any party can terminate the deal with or without cause, NMASA upon review of the deal does not see any conflict with the contract if NMA will be allowed to operate the mentioned facilities. The agreement only states that LG Twin can use the facilities inside the complex from to November to February and there were no cash exchanges between the parties. Instead of paying usage fees, LG Twins is credited for the improvement they have done in the facilities.

White also reported during the NMASA meeting that only DCCA and LG Twins signed the contract and the Attorney General Office never approved the deal. NMASA believed the deal was not a government contract.

After getting a copy of the deal, NMASA plans to communicate with DCCA anew and other concerned parties and find ways to accomplish its goal. *Saipan Tribune* emailed DCCA secretary Melvin Faisao to request for comments on this story, but has yet to respond at press time.

NMASA has a say on the maintenance and operation of the facilities at the Oleai Sports Complex as stated in PL No. 4-66 approved by then Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio during the 4th Legislature in 1984. However, for more than 20 years, the Division of Sports and Recreation, which is under DCCA, has been in charge of the complex. DSR operates the complex through funds DCCA gets from the government and usage fees, while NMASA draws its own funding from membership fees. NMASA is hoping to secure funding from the government to maintain the complex.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	5	2	.714	–
New York	4	4	.500	1 1/2
Boston	4	4	.500	1 1/2
Toronto	3	5	.375	2 1/2
New Jersey	2	7	.222	4

Southeast Division

Miami	8	1	.889	–
Orlando	6	3	.667	2
Atlanta	6	3	.667	2
Charlotte	2	6	.250	5 1/2
Washington	0	8	.000	7 1/2

Central Division

Chicago	7	2	.778	–
Indiana	6	2	.750	1/2
Cleveland	4	4	.500	2 1/2
Detroit	2	6	.250	4 1/2
Milwaukee	2	6	.250	4 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	6	3	.667	–
Dallas	4	5	.444	2
Memphis	3	5	.375	2 1/2
Houston	2	6	.250	3 1/2
New Orleans	2	6	.250	3 1/2

Northwest Division

Oklahoma City	8	2	.800	–
Portland	6	2	.750	1
Denver	6	3	.667	1 1/2
Utah	5	3	.625	2
Minnesota	3	5	.375	4

Pacific Division

L.A. Clippers	4	2	.667	–
L.A. Lakers	6	4	.600	–
Phoenix	4	4	.500	1
Sacramento	3	6	.333	2 1/2
Golden State	2	6	.250	3

Yesterday's Games

Minnesota 93, Washington 72
Orlando 104, Sacramento 97
Oklahoma City 108, San Antonio 96
Phoenix 109, Milwaukee 93
Portland 98, Cleveland 78
L.A. Lakers 90, Memphis 82

TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS SCORES

KAPALUA, Hawaii (AP)–Scores Sunday from the Tournament of Champions, a PGA Tour event played at the 7,411-yard, par-73 Plantation Course at Kapalua.

THIRD ROUND

Steve Stricker	68-63-69–200
Jonathan Byrd	67-71-67–205
Martin Laird	68-70-67–205
Webb Simpson	68-68-69–205
Bryce Molder	71-70-67–208
Kevin Na	73-64-71–208
Harrison Frazar	74-69-66–209
Ben Crane	72-71-68–211
Rory Sabbatini	73-70-68–211
Chris Kirk	75-66-70–211
D.A. Points	71-69-71–211
Johnson Wagner	72-72-68–212
Nick Watney	73-71-68–212
K.J. Choi	70-73-69–212
Scott Piercy	72-71-69–212
Mark Wilson	72-71-69–212
Sean O'Hair	73-70-70–213
Bubba Watson	74-69-72–215
Bill Haas	73-73-70–216
Keegan Bradley	69-72-75–216
Gary Woodland	73-71-73–217
Scott Stallings	74-69-74–217
Aaron Baddeley	75-68-74–217
Michael Bradley	68-75-75–218
Brendan Steele	76-76-72–224
Jhonattan Vegas	75-73-76–224
David Toms	76-74-75–225

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

2011 XGA Ace of the Aces Tournament

PHOTOS by WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND

Participants in the 2011 XGA Ace of the Aces Tournament pose for a group photo last Saturday at the Coral Ocean Point.

Carl Hocog watches as his approach lands safely on the green.

John Reyes, left, winces after missing from five feet.

John Reyes tries to sink this putt to save par.

Poland Masaharu shows nice form as he makes contact from the tee box.

Hyun An rears back his driver before sending off his tee shot.

Ernie Sablan takes a big hack to get his ball out of some intermediate rough.

Mike Sablan takes his tee shot down the left side of the fairway.

Carl Hocog chokes up on his putter and sinks a three-footer.

Look for 'big boy' football in BCS title game
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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Tebow rules in OT, lifts Broncos past Steelers
PAGE 25

Astig Futsal, IT&E top youth league

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Astig Futsal and IT&E went undefeated in two rounds to rule their respective divisions in the 2011 Saipan Soccer School Youth Futsal League.

Astig Futsal clinched two championships, winning the boys U15 and girls U17 divisions, while IT&E claimed the boys U18 crown af-

See **ASTIG** on **Page 26**

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Members of IT&E, left photo, and Astig Futsal pose with their championship trophies and competition organizers during the awards ceremony for the 2011 Saipan Soccer School Youth Futsal League last night at the lobby of the Saipan Grand Hotel.

Sublemente draws first blood in Enticer

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

XTERRA World participant Butch Sublemente warmed up for the 2012 XTERRA Saipan Championship with a win in last Saturday's Enticer 1.

Sublemente finished on top of the first of a series of races that aimed at preparing local bets for the two big triathlon events in March, timing in at 49 minutes and seven seconds. He completed the swim leg (with a distance of between 500m and 600m) in the waters of PauPau Beach in about 10 minutes, timed in at about 25 minutes in the trail bike race that brought riders to Marianas Country Club up to the one million gallon tank, FEBC road, and back to Paupau, and about 15 minutes in

See SUBLEMENTE on **Page 26**

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Butch Sublemente prepares to go the swim-bike transition area during last Saturday's XTERRA/ Tagaman Enticer 1 at Paupau Beach.

WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND

Marianas High School's Ezra Caro slashes to the hoop during their opening game against Grace Christian Academy in the MISO caging yesterday at the MHS Gymnasium.

Rousing debut for MHS Dolphins

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

The Marianas High School Dolphins opened up the 2011-2012 Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization Boys Basketball League with a booming 94-39 victory over the Grace Christian Academy Eagles yesterday at the MHS Gymnasium.

The Dolphins wasted no time breaking out to a 21-8 lead in the first quarter, riding the coat tails of Ezra Caro. Caro cashed in on eight quick points after the tip and helped keep the Eagles to single digits with solid defense and a truckload of rebounds.

Angelo Salas tried to start the Eagles' engine with a string of eight markers in the second period, but his teammates continued to struggle under the basket.

Meanwhile, on the other end, MHS found some offense from a handful of players as the Dolphins trudged ahead at

See ROUSING on **Page 26**

NMASA to still pursue Oleai complex takeover

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association remains firm on its decision to take over the maintenance and management of the Oleai Sports Complex and its facilities.

During the group's monthly meeting last week, NMASA president Michael White reported that the board has been very active the past few months, taking the necessary steps to push for the takeover. White said they had

See NMASA on **Page 26**